PART III 1939-1951 Gadarwara

- (1) 1939 Osho settles in Gadarwara with Nani, and his parents
- (2) Osho's paternal grandfather, Baba
- (3) Osho and his father
- (4) Swimming in the river, and early spiritual experiences
- (5) Osho's first day at school, and Shambhu Dube
- (6) Osho's early love of Books
- (7) Osho's early experiences with orthodox religions
- (8) Village entertainment
- (9) Other villagers
- (10) Osho meets Mahatma Gandhi
- (11) Influence of the mystic, Magga Baba
- (12) Influence of mystics, Pagal Baba and Masto
- (13) Osho's interest in death
- (14) 1947 Indian Independence
- (15) 1948 Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi
- (16) Osho's early experiences as story-teller and public speaker
- (17) Osho's growing library
- (18) 1948 High School
- (19) 1951 Osho leaves school, and decides to study philosophy

PART III

Gadarwara

1939-1951

Osho settles in Gadarwara with Nani,

and his parents

And after my Nana's death, my Nani never went back to the village of Kuchwada; she was so heartbroken. I have seen thousands of couples very intimately because I have been staying with so many families, wandering around India, but I could never find anybody who could be compared with those two old people: they really loved each other.

When my Nana died, my Nani--my maternal grandmother--wanted to die with him. It was a difficult task to prevent her. She wanted to sit on the funeral pyre with her husband. She said, "My life is gone--now what is the point of being alive?" Everybody tried, and by that time.... This is an ancient tradition in India called *sati.*

The word sati means the woman who dies sits on the funeral pyre, alive, with her dead husband. The word sati means truthfulness. *Sat* means "truth," also "being"; sati means "who has a true being--whose being is of truthfulness." She has loved the person so deeply that she has become identified with his life; there is no point in her living. But after the British Raj the sati tradition was declared illegal.

To the Western eye it looked almost like committing suicide; literally it was so. And for almost ninety-nine percent of women who became satis it was nothing but suicide. But for one percent I cannot say it was suicide. For one percent, to live without the person whom they had loved totally and from whom they had never thought for a single moment to be separated, living was suicide.

But law is blind and cannot make such fine distinctions. What Britishers saw was certainly ugly and had to be stopped. The one percent went on the funeral pyre of their own accord. But it became such a respectable thing that any woman who was not willing to do it...and it was really a very dangerous, torturous way of dying--just entering the funeral pyre alive!

Ninety-nine percent were not willing to do it but their families, their relatives felt awkward because this meant the woman never loved the man totally. It would be a condemnation of the whole family: the honor of the family was at stake. So what these people did was they forced the woman; and a certain climate was created in which you would not be able to discover that the woman was being forced. She was of course in a terrible state, in a great shock.

She was taken to the funeral pyre and on the funeral pyre so much ghee, purified butter, was poured that there was a cloud of smoke all over the place; you could not see what is happening. Around that cloud there were hundreds of brahmins loudly chanting Sanskrit sutras, and behind the brahmins there was a big band with all kinds of instruments making as much noise as possible--so to hear the woman screaming or crying or trying to get out of the funeral pyre was impossible. Around the funeral pyre the brahmins were standing with burning torches to push the woman back in.

When Britishers saw this--this was certainly not only suicide but murder too. In fact, it was murder; the woman was not willing. The whole atmosphere was created so that you could not hear her screams, you could not see that she was trying to escape--everybody else was out of the circles of brahmins.

When Britishers found out that this was something criminal and ugly, they made it illegal: if any woman tried it and was found out and caught alive, she would be sentenced for her whole life. And anybody who persuaded her--the family, the priests, the neighbors--they were also partners in the crime and they would also be punished according to whatsoever part they had played in it.

So the institution slowly slowly disappeared; it had to disappear. But once in a while those one percent of women were always there for whom it didn't matter, because their lives were now a sentence unto death. Why not take the chance of finishing it with your loved one?

So they all tried, everybody, to persuade my Nani not to do it, but she said, "I have nothing to live for. I cannot go back to my village because in that same house where we both lived our whole life for sixty years, I cannot live alone. He will be too much there. I have not eaten a single meal before he did; it will be impossible for me to eat. In the first place, impossible to

cook because I used to cook for him; he loved delicious foods and I enjoyed cooking for him. Just to see him delighted was my delight. Now for whom am I going to cook?

"And I have never taken my meal before him. Even if it was very late if he had gone to some other village for some work, or to the court in a faraway town--l had to wait the whole day, but it was a joy to wait for him. In sixty years of married life I have not eaten a single meal before him."

That has been a tradition in India: how can you eat unless the person you love and for whom you have cooked and prepared has eaten?...

For almost ten or twelve days my grandmother didn't eat. First it was difficult to prevent her from going on the funeral pyre. Finally they all, my whole family, told me, "Only you can persuade her; you have been with her for seven years." And certainly I succeeded. All that I had to do--l said to her, "You are saying constantly, 'For what do I have to live?' Not for me? Just tell me you don't want to live for me. Then I will tell the whole family that we both are going on the funeral pyre."

She said, "What!"

I said, "Then why am I going to be here? For what? It is good we both go."

She said, "Stop this nonsense. Who has ever heard of a boy, seven years old...? It is not for you, it is for a woman whose husband has died."

I said, "Your husband has died, my Nana has died, and my Nani is going to die--it is enough reason for me. And anyway, any day I will have to die, so why wait so long? Finish it quickly."

She said, "I know you are mischievous and even though your Nana is dead you are playing a trick on me."

I said, "Then stop harassing the whole family, otherwise I am coming with you." She agreed that she wouldn't go to the funeral, she would live for me.

She stayed in my father's town, but she was a very independent woman: she did not like the big joint family; my father's brothers, their wives, their children--it was a huge caravan. She said, "This is not the place for me. I have lived my whole life with my husband, in silence. Only for seven years were you there, otherwise there has not been much conversation either, because there was nothing to say. We had talked about all those things before, so there was nothing to say--we just sat silently."

And it was a beautiful place where they lived, facing a very big lake, so they would sit looking at the lake and the water birds flying, coming in thousands in certain seasons.

She said, "I would like to live alone." So a house was found for her near the river where she would find some similarity; in this town we had no lake but we had a beautiful river.

The whole day I was in school or roaming around the town or doing a thousand and one things, and at night I always stayed with my Nani. Many times she said, "Your parents may feel bad. We took you from them for seven years, for which they cannot forgive us. We thought that we should return you as clean as we had got you, not trying to impose anything on you. But they are angry; they don't say so but I can feel it and I hear from other people that we spoiled you. And now you don't go to sleep with your father and mother and your family; you come here every night. They will think that the spoiling is continuing--the old man is gone but the old woman is still here."

I said to her, "But if I don't come can you really sleep? For whom do you prepare the second bed every night before I come?--because I do not tell you that tomorrow I will be coming. About tomorrow, from the very beginning I have been uncertain because who knows what will happen tomorrow? Why do you prepare the second bed? And not only the second bed...."

I had a long habit which my physician somehow had to manage to finish; it took him almost two or three years. I had, from my very childhood, as long as I remember, needed sweets before going to bed, otherwise I could not sleep. So she was not only preparing my bed, she used to go out and buy sweets, the sweets that I liked, and she would keep the sweets by my bed so that I could eat; even in the middle of the night if I felt like it again, I could eat. She would put enough so that if you ate the whole night there would be no problem.

I asked her, "For whom do you bring these sweets?--you don't eat them; since Nana died you have not tasted sweets." My Nana loved sweets. In fact it seems he gave me this idea of sweets; he also used to eat before going to sleep. That is not done in any Jaina family. Jainas don't eat in the night; they don't even drink water or milk or anything. But he lived in a village where he was the only Jaina, so there was no problem. And it is perhaps from him that I got the habit. I don't remember even how I started it: it must have been he, eating and calling me also to join him. I must have joined him, and by and by it became a routine thing. For seven years he trained me!

I could not go to my parents' house for two reasons. One reason was those sweets--because in my mother's place it was not possible: there were so many children that if you allowed one child, then all the children would ask. And anyway it was against the religion--you simply could not even ask. But my difficulty was this, that I could not go to sleep without them.

Secondly, I felt, "My Nani must be feeling to be alone, and here it is difficult to be alone--so many people, it is always a marketplace. Nobody will be missing me if I am not here." Nobody ever missed me. They just made certain that I was sleeping with my Nani, then there was no problem.

So even after those seven years I was not under the influence of my parents. It was just accidental that from the very beginning I was on my own. Doing right or wrong--that was not the important thing, but doing on my own. And slowly slowly, that became my style of life, about everything--for example, about clothes. *misery01*

I wanted to go back to the village of Kuchwada but nobody was ready to support me. I could not conceive how I could exist there alone, without my grandfather, my grandmother, or Bhoora. No, it was not possible, so I reluctantly said, "Okay, I will stay in my father's village." But my mother naturally wanted me to stay with her and not with my grandmother, who from the very beginning had made it clear that she would stay in the same village, but separately. A little house was found for her in a very beautiful place near the river.

My mother insisted that I stay with her. For over seven years I had not been living with my family. But my family was not a small affair, it was a whole jumbo-jet--so many people, all kinds of people: my uncles, my aunts, their children and my uncle's relatives, and so on and so forth.

In India the family is not the same as in the West. In the West it is just singular: the husband, the wife, one, two or three children. At the most there may be five people in the family. In India people would laugh--five? Only five? In India the family is uncountable. There are hundreds of people. Guests come and visit and never leave, and nobody says to them, "Please, it is time for you to go," because in fact nobody knows whose guests they are.

The father thinks, "Perhaps they are my wife's relatives so it is better to keep quiet." The mother thinks, "Perhaps they are my husband's relatives...." In India it is possible to enter a home where you are not related at all, and if you keep your mouth shut, you can live there forever. Nobody will tell you to get out; everybody will think somebody else invited you. You have only to keep quiet and keep smiling....

I did not want to enter this family, and I told my mother, "Either I will go back to the village alone--the bullock cart is ready, and I know the way; I will get there somehow. And I know the villagers: they will help support a child. And it is only a question of a few years, then I will repay them as much as I can. But I cannot live in this family. This is not a family, it's a bazaar."

And it was a bazaar, continuously buzzing with so many people, no space at all, no silence. Even if an elephant had jumped into that ancient pond, nobody would have heard the plop; there was too much going on. I simply refused, saying, "If I have to stay then the only alternative is for me to live with my Nani."

My mother was, of course, hurt. I am sorry, because since then I have been hurting her again and again. I could not help it. In fact I was not responsible; the situation was such that I could not live in that family after so many years of absolute freedom, silence, space. In fact, in my Nana's house I was the only one who was ever heard. My Nana was mostly silently chanting his mantra, and of course my grandmother had no one else to talk to.

I was the only one who was ever heard; otherwise there was silence. After years of such beautitude, then to live in that so-called family, full of unfamiliar faces, uncles, and their fathers-in-law, cousins--what a lot! One could not even figure out who was who! Later I used to think somebody ought to publish a small booklet about my family, a *Who's Who.*...

I wanted to return to the village but could not. I had to come to a compromise just not to hurt my mother. But I know I have been hurting her, really wounding her. Whatsoever she wanted I have never done; in fact, just the opposite. Naturally, slowly slowly she accepted me as one who was lost to her....

I could not manage to live in the family according to them. Everybody was giving birth; every woman was almost always pregnant. Whenever I remember my family I suddenly think of freaking out--although I cannot freak out; I just enjoy the idea of freaking out. All the women were always with big bellies. One pregnancy over, another starts--and so many children....

"No," I said to my mother, "I know it hurts you, and I am sorry, but I will live with my grandmother. She is the only one who can understand me and allow me not only love but freedom too." *glimps19*

Everybody is born in a family. I was born in a family. And in India there are joint families, big families. In my family there must have been fifty to sixty people--all the cousins, uncles, aunts, living together. I have seen the whole mess of it. In fact, those sixty people helped me not to create my own family. That experience was enough.

If you are intelligent enough, you learn even from other people's mistakes. If you are not intelligent, then you don't learn even from your own mistakes. So I learned from my father's mistake, my mother's mistake, my uncles', my aunts'. It was a big family, and I saw the whole circus, the misery, the continuous conflict, fights about small things, meaningless. From my very childhood one thing became decisive in me, that I was not going to create a family of my own.

I was surprised that everybody is born in a family.... And why does he still go on creating a family? Seeing the whole scene, he again repeats it. *socrat05*

Osho's paternal grandfather, Baba

My paternal grandfather loved very much. He was old, very old, but he remained active to the very last breath. He loved nature almost too much. He lived in a faraway farm. Once in a while he would come to the city, but he never liked it. He always liked the wild world, where he lived.

Once in a while I used to go to him and he always liked somebody to massage his feet. He was becoming so old and he was working so hard, so I would massage his feet. But I told him, "Remember, I am not fulfilling any responsibility. I don't have any responsibility towards anyone in the world. I love you, and I will massage your feet but only up to the point where it is not troublesome to me. So when I stop, never ask me to do a little more. I will not. I am

doing it out of my joy, not because you are my grandfather. I could have done the same to any beggar, any stranger, just out of love."

He understood the point. He said, "I never thought that responsibility and love are two things. But you are right. When I am working on the field, I always feel I am doing it for my children and their children, as a duty. It is heavy on my heart. But I will try to change this attitude of responsibility. I may be too old to change--it has become a fixation in my mind--but I will try to change."

I said to him, "There is no need. If you feel it is becoming a burden on you, you have done enough. You rest. There is no need to continue working, unless you enjoy the open sky and the green field and love these trees and the birds. If you are doing it out of joy and you love your children and you want to do something for them, only then continue. Otherwise stop."

Although he was old, something synchronized between me and him. That never happened with any other member of my family. We were great friends. I was the youngest in the family and he was the oldest, just two polarities. And everybody in the house laughed, "What kind of friendship is this? You laugh together, you joke with each other, you play with each other, you run after each other. And he is so old and you are so young. And you don't communicate the same way with anybody else, nor does he communicate the same way with anybody else."

I said, "Something has happened between us. He loves me and I love him. Now it is no more a question of any relationship; neither am I his grandchild nor is he my grandfather. We are just two friends: one is old, one is young." *chit30*

My grandfather was not a religious man, not at all. He was closer to Zorba the Greek: eat, drink and be merry; there is no other world, it is all nonsense. My father was a very religious man; perhaps it was because of my grandfather--the reaction, the generation gap. But it was just upside down in my family: my grandfather was an atheist and perhaps because of his atheism my father turned out to be a theist. And whenever my father would go to the temple, my grandfather would laugh and he would say, "Again! Go on, waste your life in front of those stupid statues!"

I love Zorba for many reasons; one of the reasons was that in Zorba I found my grandfather again. He loved food so much that he used to not trust anybody; he would prepare it himself. In my life I have been a guest in thousands of families in India, but I have never tasted anything so delicious as my grandfather's cooking. And he loved it so much that every week it was a feast for all his friends--and he would prepare the whole day.

My mother and my aunts and the servants and cooks--everybody was thrown out of the kitchen. When my grandfather was cooking, nobody was to disturb him. But he was very friendly to me; he allowed me to watch and he said, "Learn, don't depend on other people. Only you know your taste. Who else can know it?"

I said, "That is beyond me; I am too lazy, but I can watch. The whole day cooking?--I cannot do it." So I have not learned anything, but just watching was a joy--the way he worked, almost

like a sculptor or a musician or a painter. Cooking was not just cooking, it was art to him. And if anything went just a little below his standard, he would throw it away immediately. He would cook it again, and I would say, "It is perfectly okay."

He would say, "You know it is not perfectly okay, it is just okay; but I am a perfectionist. Until it comes up to my standard, I am not going to offer it to anybody. I love my food."

He used to make many kinds of drinks...and whatsoever he did the whole family was against him: they said that he was just a nuisance. He wouldn't allow anybody in the kitchen, and in the evening he gathered all the atheists of the town. And just to defy Jainism, he would wait till the sun set. He would not eat before because Jainism says: eat before sunset; after sunset eating is not allowed. He used to send me again and again to see whether the sun had set or not.

He annoyed the whole family. And they could not be angry with him--he was the head of the family, the oldest man--but they were angry at me. That was easier. They said, "Why do you go on coming again and again to see whether the sun has set or not? That old man is getting you also lost, utterly lost."

I was very sad because I only came across the book *Zorba the Greek,* when my grandfather was dying*. The only thing that I felt at his funeral pyre was that he would have loved it if I had translated it for him and read it for him. I had read many books to him. He was uneducated. He could only write his signature, that was all. He could neither read nor write--but he was very proud of it.

He used to say, "It is good that my father did not force me to go to school, otherwise he would have spoiled me. These books spoil people so much." He would say to me, "Remember, your father is spoiled, your uncles are spoiled; they are continually reading religious books, scriptures, and it is all rubbish. While they are reading, I am living; and it is good to know through living."

He used to tell me, "They will send you to the university--they won't listen to me. And I cannot be much help, because if your father and your mother insist, they will send you to the university. But beware: don't get lost in books."

He enjoyed small things. I asked him, "Everybody believes in God, why don't you believe, baba?" I called him baba; that is the word for (paternal) grandfather in India.

He said, "Because I am not afraid."

A very simple answer: "Why should I be afraid? There is no need to be afraid; I have not done any wrong, I have not harmed anybody. I have just lived my life joyously. If there is any God, and I meet Him sometime, He cannot be angry at me. I will be angry at Him:'Why have You created this world?--this kind of world?' I am not afraid." *ignor16*

*Note: grandfather dies after Osho became a professor, see Part V

Look at the East: in the villages still, a businessman is not just a profit maker, and the customer has not come just to purchase something. They enjoy it. I remember my old grandfather. He was a cloth merchant, and I and my whole family were puzzled because he enjoyed it so much. For hours together it was a game with the customers. If something was worth ten rupees, he would ask fifty rupees for it--and he knew this was absurd, and his customers knew it too. They knew that it must be worth nearabout ten rupees, and they would start from two rupees. Then a long haggling would follow--hours together. My father and my uncles would get angry. "What is going on? Why don't you simply say what the price is?" But he had his own customers. When they came, they would ask, "Where is Dada, where is grandfather? because with him it is a game, a play. Whether we lose one rupee or two, whether it is more or less, that is not the point!"

They enjoyed it. The very activity in itself was something worth pursuing. Two persons were communicating through it. Two persons were playing a game and both knew it was a game--because of course a fixed price was possible.

In the West now they have fixed prices, because people are more calculating and more profit-motivated. They cannot conceive of wasting time. Why waste time? The thing can be settled within minutes. There is no need. You can just write the exact price. Why fight for hours together? But then the game is lost and the whole thing becomes a routine. Even machines can do it. The businessman is not needed; the customer is not needed....

Even now in villages in India the haggling goes on. It is a game and worth enjoying. You are playing. It is a match between two intelligences, and two persons come in deep contact. But it is not time-saving. Games can never be time-saving. And in games you don't worry about the time. You are carefree, and whatsoever is going on, you enjoy it right in that moment. *vbt79*

Osho and his father

But the first seven years are the most important in life; never again will you have that much opportunity. Those seven years decide your seventy years, all the foundation stones are laid in those seven years. So by a strange coincidence I was saved from my parents--and by the time I reached them, I was almost on my own, I was already flying. I knew I had wings. I knew that I didn't need anybody's help to make me fly. I knew that the whole sky is mine.

I never asked for their guidance, and if any guidance was given to me I always retorted, "This is insulting. Do you think I cannot manage it myself? I do understand that there is no bad intention in giving guidance--for that I am thankful--but you do not understand one thing, that I am capable of doing it on my own. Just give me a chance to prove my mettle. Don't interfere."

In those seven years I became really a strong individualist: hard-core. Now it was impossible to put any trip on me.

I used to pass through my father's shop, because the shop was in front--at the back was the house where the family lived. That's how it happens in India: house and shop are together so it is easily manageable. I used to pass through my father's shop with closed eyes.

He asked me, "This is strange. Whenever you pass through the shop into the house, or from the house"-- it was just a twelve foot space to pass--"you always keep your eyes closed. What ritual are you practising?"

I said, "I am simply practicing so that this shop does not destroy me as it has destroyed you. I don't want to see it at all; I am absolutely uninterested, totally uninterested." And it was one of the most beautiful cloth shops in that city--the best materials were available there--but I never looked to the side, I simply closed my eyes and passed by!

He said, "But in opening your eyes there is no harm."

I said, "One never knows--one can be distracted. I don't want to be distracted by anything." *misery01*

When I was very small I had long hair like a girl. In India boys don't have that long hair--at least at that time it was not allowed. I used to have very long hair, and whenever I used to enter, and the entrance was from the shop.... The house was behind the shop, so to enter I had to pass through the shop. My father was there, his customers were there, and they would say, "Whose girl is this?"

My father would look at me and say, "What to do? He does not listen." And he felt offended.

I said, "You need not feel offended. I don't see any problem. If somebody calls me a girl or a boy, that is his business; what difference does it make to me?"

But he was offended that his boy was being called a girl. Just the idea of a boy and girl.... In India when a boy is born, there are gongs and bands and songs, and sweets are distributed in the whole neighborhood. And when a girl is born, nothing happens--nothing. You immediately know that a girl is born because no gongs, no bells, no band, no singing--nothing is happening, no distribution of sweets--that means a girl is born. Nobody will come to ask because it will be offending you: you will have to answer that a girl is born. The father is sitting with his face down...a girl is born.

So he said, "This is strange. I have a boy, and I am suffering from having a girl." So one day he really became angry because the man who had asked was a very important man; he was the collector of the district. He was sitting in the shop, and he asked, "Whose girl is this? It is strange, the clothes seem to be a boy's--and with so many pockets and all full of stones?"

My father said, "What to do? He is a boy, he is not a girl. But today I am going to cut his hair--this is enough!" So he came with his scissors and cut my hair. I didn't say anything to him. I went to the barber's shop which was just in front of my house and I told him.... He was an opium addict, a very beautiful man, but sometimes he would cut half your mustache and

would forget the other half. You would be sitting in his chair, with his cloth around your neck and he was gone, so you would search--where had he gone? It was difficult; nobody knew where he had gone. And with a half mustache, where would you go to search for him? But he was the only one I liked, because it took hours.

He would tell you a thousand and one things, unrelated to anything in the world. I enjoyed it. It is from that man, Nathur--Nathur, that was his name--that I learned how the human mind is. My first acquaintance with the human mind came from him, because he was not a hypocrite. He would say anything that came to his mind; in fact, between his mind and his mouth there was no difference!--he simply spoke whatsoever was in his mind. If he was fighting with somebody in his mind, he would start fighting loudly--and nobody was there. I was the only one who would not ask, "With whom are you fighting?" So he was very happy with me, so happy that he would never charge me for cutting my nails or anything.

That day I went there and I told him--we used to call him "Kaka", kaka means uncle--"Kaka, if you are in your senses, just shave my whole head."

He said, "Great." He was not in his senses. If he had been, he would have refused because in India you shave your head only when your father dies; otherwise it is not shaved. So he had taken a good dose of opium and he shaved my head completely.

I said, "That's good."

I went back. My father looked at me and said, "What happened?"

I said, "What is the point? You cut my hair with the scissors; it will grow again. I am finished with that. And Kaka is willing, I have asked him. He said he is willing: 'Whenever there is no customer you can come and I will shave your head completely, and no question of money.' So you need not be worried. I am his free customer because nobody listens to him; I am the only person who listens."

My father said, "But you know perfectly well that now this will create more trouble."

And immediately one man came and asked, "What happened? Has this boy's father died?" Without that, nobody....

Then my father said, "Look! It was better that you were a girl. Now I am dead! You grow your hair as fast as you can. Go to your Kaka, that opium addict, and ask him if he can help somehow; otherwise this is going to create more trouble for me. The whole town will go on coming. You will be moving around the whole city and everybody will think that your father is dead. They will start coming."

And they did start coming. That was the last time he did anything to me. After that he said, "I am not going to do anything because it leads into more trouble."

I said, "I had not asked--I simply go on doing my thing. You interfered unnecessarily." *ignor13*

One day I was playing--I must have been five or six years old... A man used to come to see my father, an utterly boring man. And my father was growing tired of him. So he called me and told me, "I see that man is coming; he will waste my time unnecessarily and it is very difficult to get rid of him. I always have to go out, and say to him, `Now I have some appointment'--unnecessarily I have to go out, just to get rid of him. And sometimes it happens that he says, `I am coming with you. So on the way we can have a good talk.' And there is no talk, it is a monologue. He talks, and tortures people."

So my father said, "I am going inside. You just remain playing outside. And when he comes, you simply say to him that your father is out."

And my father used to teach me continuously, "Never speak an untruth." So I was shocked. This was contradictory.

So when the man came and asked me, "Where is your father?" I said, "He is in, but he says that he is out."

My father heard this from inside, and the man entered with me, so he could not say anything in front of him. When the man had gone, after two or three hours my father was really angry with me, not with the man.

He said, "I told you to tell him, `My father is out.'"

I said, "Exactly, I repeated the same thing. I told him the same thing: `My father says to tell you that he is out. But he is in, the truth is he is in.' You have been teaching me to be true whatever the consequence. So I am ready for the consequence. Any punishment, if you want to give me, give. But remember, if truth is punished, truth is destroyed. Truth has to be rewarded. Give me some reward, so I can go on speaking the truth whatever happens."

He looked at me and he said, "You are clever."

I said, "That you know already. Just give me some reward. I have spoken the truth."

And he had to give me some reward; he gave me a one rupee note. At that time one rupee was almost equal to twenty-five rupees today. You could live with a one rupee note for almost half a month. And he said, "Go and enjoy whatever you want to purchase."

I said, "You have to remember it. If you tell me to speak a lie, I am going to tell the person that you have told me to. I am not telling a lie. And each time you contradict yourself, you will have to reward me. So stop lying. If you don't want that man, you should tell him directly that you don't have any time and don't like his boring talk because he says the same things again and again. Why are you afraid? Why do you have to tell a lie?"

He said, "The difficulty is, he is my best customer."

My father had a very beautiful cloth shop, and this man was rich. He used to purchase a huge lot for his family, relatives, friends. He was a very generous man--just being boring was his problem.

So my father said, "I have to suffer all the boredom because he is my best customer and I cannot lose him."

I said, "That is your problem, that is not my problem. So you are lying because he is your best customer, and I am going to say this to him."

He said, "Wait!"

I said, "I cannot wait because he must be told immediately that you go on suffering all his boring talk just because he is a good customer--and you will have to give me some reward."

He said, "You are so difficult. You are destroying my best customer. And I will have to give you a reward too. But just don't do that."

But I did it. And I got two rewards, one from that boring man because I told him, "Truth should always be rewarded, so give me some reward because I am destroying one of the best customers of my father."

He hugged me and he gave me two rupees. And I said, "Remember, don't stop buying from my father's shop, but don't bore him either. If you want to talk, you can talk to the walls, to the trees. The whole world is available. You can just close your room and talk to yourself. And then you will be bored."

And I told my father, "Don't be worried. Look, one rupee I have got from you, two rupees I have got from your customer. Now one more rupee I am owed; you have to give it me, because I have told the truth. But don't be worried. I have made him a better customer and he will never bore you again. He has promised me."

My father said, "You have done a miracle!" Since that day that man never came, or even if he did come he would stay just for one or two minutes to say hello and he would go away. And he continued to purchase from my father's shop.

And he said to my father, "It is because of your son that I continue. Otherwise I would have felt wounded, but that little boy managed both things. He stopped me boring you and he asked me, requested me, `Don't stop shopping from my father's shop. He depends on you.' And he got two rupees from me and he was saying such a shocking thing to me. Nobody has ever dared tell me that I am a boring man."

He was the richest man in the village. Everybody was in some way connected with him. People borrowed money from him, people have borrowed lands from him to work on. He was the richest man and the biggest landowner in that village. Everybody was somehow or other obliged to him, so nobody was able to say to him that he was boring.

So he said, "It was a very great shock, but it was true. I know I am boring. I bore myself with my thoughts. That's why I go to others to bore them, just to get rid of my thoughts. If I am bored with my thoughts, I know perfectly well the other person will be bored, but everybody is under an obligation to me. Only this boy has no obligation and is not afraid of the consequences. And he is daring. He asked for the reward. He said to me, `If you don't reward truth, you are rewarding lies.'"

This is why this society is in such a mad space. Everybody is teaching you to be truthful, and nobody is rewarding you for being truthful, so they create a schizophrenia. *gdead07*

Living two or three blocks away from my family was a brahmin family, very orthodox brahmins. Brahmins cut all their hair and just leave a small part on the seventh chakra on the head uncut so that part goes on growing. They go on tying it and keeping it inside their cap or inside their turban. And what I had done was, I had cut the father's hair. In summertime in India, people sleep outside the house, on the street. They bring their beds, cots, on the streets. The whole town sleeps on the streets in the night, it is so hot inside.

So this brahmin was sleeping--and it was not my fault...he had such a long *choti;* it is called choti, that bunch of hair. I had never seen it because it was always hidden inside his turban. While he was sleeping, it was hanging down and touching the street. From his cot it was so long that I was tempted, I could not resist; I rushed home, brought the scissors, cut it off completely and took it and kept it in my room.

In the morning he must have found that it was gone. he could not believe it because his whole purity was in it, his whole religion was in it--his whole spirituality was destroyed. But everybody in the neighborhood knew that if anything goes wrong...first they would rush to me. And he came immediately. I was sitting outside knowing well that he would come in the morning. He looked at me. I also looked at him. He said to me, "What are you looking at?"

I said, "What are you looking at? Same thing."

He said, "Same thing?"

I said, "Yes. The same thing. You name it.

He asked, "Where is your father? I don't want to talk to you at all."

He went in. He brought my father out and my father said, "Have you done anything to this man?"

I said, "I have not done anything to this man, but I have cut a choti which certainly cannot belong to this man, because when I was cutting it, what was he doing? He could have prevented it."

The man said, "I was asleep."

I said, "If I had cut your finger while you were asleep, would you have remained asleep?"

He said, "How could I remain asleep if somebody was cutting my finger?"

I said, "That certainly shows that hairs are dead. You can cut them but a person is not hurt, no blood comes out. So what is the fuss about? A dead thing was hanging there...and I thought that you are unnecessarily carrying this dead thing inside your turban for your whole life--why not relieve you? It is in my room. And with my father I have the contract to be true."

So I brought out his choti and said, "If you are so interested in it, you can take it back. If it is your spirituality, your brahminism, you can keep it tied and put it inside your turban. It is dead anyway; it was dead when it was attached to you, it was dead when I detached it. You can keep it inside your turban."

And I asked my father, "My reward?"--in front of that man.

That man said, "What reward is he asking for?"

My father said, "This is the trouble. Yesterday he proposed a contract that if he speaks the truth, and sincerely... He is not only speaking the truth, he is even giving the proof. He has told the whole story--and even has logic behind it, that it was a dead thing so why be bothered with a dead thing? And he is not hiding anything."

He rewarded me with five rupees. In those days, in that small village, five rupees was a great reward. The man was mad at my father. He said, "You will spoil this child. You should beat him rather than giving him five rupees. Now he will cut other people's chotis. If he gets five rupees per choti, all the brahmins of the town are finished, because they are all sleeping outside in the night; and when you are sleeping you cannot go on holding your choti in your hand. And what are you doing?--this will become a precedent."

My father said, "But this is my contract. If you want to punish him, that is your business; I will not come into it. I am not rewarding him for his mischief, I am rewarding him for his truth--and for my whole life I will go on rewarding him for his truth. As far as mischief is concerned, you are free to do anything with him." *ignor14*

My father only punished me once because I had gone to a fair which used to happen a few miles away from the city every year. There flows one of the holy rivers of the Hindus, the Narmada, and on the bank of the Narmada there used to be a big fair for one month. So I simply went there without asking him.

There was so much going on in the fair....I had gone only for one day and I was thinking I would be back by the night, but there were so many things: magicians, a circus, drama. It was not possible to come back in one day, so three days.... The whole family was in a panic: where had I gone?

It had never happened before. At the most I had come back late in the night but I had never been away for three days continuously...and with no message. They enquired at every friend's house. Nobody knew about me and the fourth day when I came home my father was really angry. Before asking me anything, he slapped me. I didn't say anything.

I said, "Do you want to slap me more? You can, because I have enjoyed enough in three days. You cannot slap me more than I have enjoyed, so you can do a few more slaps. It will cool you down, and to me it is just balancing. I have enjoyed myself."

He said, "You are really impossible. Slapping you is meaningless. You are not hurt by it; you are asking for more. Can't you make a distinction between punishment and reward?"

I said, "No, to me everything is a reward of some kind. There are different kinds of reward, but everything is a reward of some kind."

He asked me, "Where have you been for these three days?"

I said, "This you should have asked before you slapped me. Now you have lost the right to ask me. I have been slapped without even being asked. It is a full stop--close the chapter. If you wanted to know, you should have asked before, but you don't have any patience. Just a minute would have been enough. But I will not keep you continually worrying where I have been, so I will tell you that I went to the fair."

He asked, "Why didn't you ask me?"

I said, "Because I wanted to go. Be truthful: if I had asked, would you have allowed me? Be truthful."

He said,"No."

I said, "That explains everything, why I did not ask you--because I wanted to go, and then it would have been more difficult for you. If I had asked you and you had said no, I still would have gone, and that would have been more difficult for you. Just to make it easier for you, I didn't ask, and I am rewarded for it. And I am ready to take any more reward you want to give me. But I have enjoyed the fair so much that I am going there every year. So you can...whenever I disappear, you know where I am. Don't be worried."

He said, "This is the last time that I punish you; the first and last time. Perhaps you are right: if you really wanted to go then this was the only way, because I was not going to allow you. In that fair every kind of thing happens: prostitutes are there, intoxicants are available, drugs are sold there"--and at that time in India there was no illegality about drugs, every drug was freely available. And in a fair all kinds of monks gather, and Hindu monks all use drugs "--so I would not have allowed you to go. And if you really wanted to go then perhaps you were right not to ask."

I told him, "But I did not bother about the prostitutes or the monks or the drugs. You know me: if I am interested in drugs, then in this very city...." Just by the side of my house there was a shop where all drugs were available: "and the man is so friendly to me that he will not take any money if I want any drug. So there is no problem. Prostitutes are available in the town; if I am interested in seeing their dances I can go there. Who can prevent me? Monks come continually in the city. But I was interested in the magicians."...

So I told my father, "I was interested only in the magic, because in the fair all kinds of magicians gather together, and I have seen some really great things. My interest is that I want to reduce miracles into magic. Magic is only about tricks--there is nothing spiritual in it--but if you don't know the trick, then certainly it appears to be a miracle."

I have been punished, but I have enjoyed every mischief so much that I don't count those punishments at all. They are nothing.

I have a certain rapport with women, perhaps that's why mischief--if it was Mister Chief or Master Chief, perhaps I would have avoided it, but Miss Chief!--the temptation was so much that I could not avoid it. In spite of all the punishment I continued it. And I still continue it! *ignor25*

I was in constant trouble in my childhood. Anybody who was older, a distant relative--in India you don't know all your relatives--my father would tell me, "Touch his feet, he is a distant relative."

I would say, "I will not touch his feet unless I find something respectable in him."

So whenever any relative was to come, they would persuade me to go out, "because it is very embarrassing. We are saying to you, `Respect the old man,' and you ask, `Let us wait. Let me see something respectable. I will touch his feet--but without knowing, how do you expect me to be honest and truthful?'"

But these are not the qualities society respects. Smile, honor, obey--whether it is right or wrong does not matter. You will have respectability. *1seed04*

In my childhood...there were many children in my family. I had ten brothers and sisters myself, then there were one uncle's children, and another uncle's children...and I saw this happening: whoever was obedient was respected. I had to decide one thing for my whole life--not only for being in my family or for my childhood--that if I in any way desire respect, respectability, then I cannot blossom as an individual. From my very childhood I dropped the idea of respectability.

I told my father, "I have to make a certain statement to you."

He was always worried whenever I would go to him, because he knew that there would be some trouble. He said, "This is not the way a child speaks to his father--`I am going to make a statement to you.'"

I said, "It is a statement through you to the whole world. Right now the whole world is not available to me; to me you represent the whole world. It is not just an issue between son and father; it is an issue between an individual and the collectivity, the mass. The statement is that I have renounced the idea of respectability, so in the name of respectability never ask anything from me; otherwise I will do just the opposite.

"I cannot be obedient. That does not mean I will always be disobedient, it simply means it will be my choice to obey or not to obey. You can request, but the decision is going to be mine. If I feel my intelligence supports it, I will do it; but it is not obedience to you, it is obedience to my own intelligence. If I feel it is not right, I am going to refuse it. I am sorry, but you have to understand one thing clearly: unless I am able to say no, my yes is meaningless."

And that's what obedience does: it cripples you--you cannot say no, you have to say yes. But when a man has become incapable of saying no, his yes is just meaningless; he is functioning like a machine. You have turned a man into a robot. So I said to him, "This is my statement. Whether you agree or not, that is up to you; but I have decided, and whatever the consequences, I am going to follow it."

It is such a world...In this world to remain free, to think on your own, to decide with your own consciousness, to act out of your own conscience has been made almost impossible. Everywhere--in the church, in the temple, in the mosque, in the school, in the university, in the family--everywhere you are expected to be obedient. *psycho04*

Trust is simply a very purified love. Love without sex, that is trust. They loved me. I was their eldest son, and in India it is traditional that the eldest son is going to inherit the whole family's property, money, everything. So the eldest son has to be trained, prepared for all the responsibilities that will be his sooner or later. He will be the head of the family, a joint family, and he will have to manage it.

Naturally they loved me. They tried their best to make me as capable, as intelligent as possible. I loved them because it was not only love from their side, but respect too--respect for my individuality. Soon they understood that nothing can be imposed on me. It took a little time for them to understand that they have a different kind of child; they cannot impose anything on me. At the most they can persuade, they can argue, and if they can convince me about something, I will do it. But they cannot just order and say, "Do it because I am your father."

I had made it clear to them that I am not going to accept anybody's order. "You may be my father, but that does not mean that you are going to be my intelligence, my individuality, my life. You have given birth to me, but that does not mean that you possess me. I am not a thing. So if you want me to do something, be prepared. Do your homework well. I am going to argue to the very end, til I feel convinced."

So on each small thing soon they recognized the fact that it is better to propose a thing and leave him to decide whether he wants to do it or not. Don't waste unnecessary time and don't

unnecessarily harass him and be harassed by him. And because they gave me every freedom, my love became trust.

Love becomes trust when it is non-possessive. It does not reduce you into a thing. It accepts your individuality, your freedom, and it has every respect for you although you are just a child. Their respect towards me became my trust towards them. I knew that they are people who can be trusted, who cannot deceive me in anything.

And because I trusted so much--this is just a circle--because I trusted so much, they could not do anything or say anything which would disturb my trust in them. They never took me to the temple, they never gave me any religion. I have grown up on my own, and they allowed it. They protected me in every possible way. They helped me in every possible way, but they never interfered with me. And that's what every parent should do.

If these three things are the guidelines, we will have a totally new world and a new man. We will have individuals, not crowds, not mobs. And every individual is so unique that to force him to become part of a crowd is to destroy him, his uniqueness. He could have contributed immensely to the world, but that was possible only if he was left alone--supported, helped, but not directed.

Everywhere now there is a vast generation gap. The parents are responsible for it, because they have been trying to impose their ideologies, political, social, religious, philosophical--all kinds of things they are trying to impose on their children. *last212*

My father.... Yes, he was a simple man, just like anybody else. So was Buddha and so was Mahavira and so was Jesus--simple people, innocent people. He was not in any way extraordinary; that was his extraordinariness. I have known him from my very childhood--so simple, so innocent, anybody could deceive him.

He used to believe anybody. I have seen many people cheating him, but his trust was immense; he never distrusted human beings although he was cheated many times. It was so simple to see that people were cheating him that even when I was a small child I used to say to him, "What are you doing? This man is simply cheating you!"

Once he built a house and a contractor was cheating him. I told him, "This house is not going to stand, it will fall, because the cement is not in the right proportion and the wood that is being used is too heavy." But he wouldn't listen; he said, "He is a good man, he cannot cheat us."

And that's what actually happened; the house could not stand the first rains. He was not there, he was in Bombay. I sent him a telegram telling him, "What I have been telling you has happened: the house has fallen." He did not even answer. He came when he was supposed to come, after seven days, and he said, "Why did you unnecessarily waste money on the telegram? The house had fallen, so it had fallen! Now what can I do? That contractor wasted ten thousand rupees and you wasted almost ten rupees unnecessarily--those could have been saved.

And the first thing that he did was to celebrate that we had not moved--because we had been going to move within two or three weeks. He celebrated: "God is gracious, he saved us. He made the house fall before we had moved into it." So he invited the whole village. Everybody was just unable to understand: "Is this a moment to celebrate?" Even the contractor was called invited, because he had done a good job: before we moved, the house fell.

He was a simple man. And if you look deep down, everybody is simple. The society makes you complex, but you are born simple and innocent. Everybody is born a Buddha; the society corrupts you. *bestil10*

Swimming in the river,

and early spiritual experiences

The first thing my own father taught me--and the only thing that he ever taught me--was a love for the small river that flows by the side of my town. He taught me just this--swimming in the river. That's all that he ever taught me, but I am tremendously grateful to him because that brought so many changes in my life. Exactly like Siddhartha, I fell in love with the river. Whenever I think of my birthplace I don't remember anything except the river.

The day my father died I only remembered the first day he brought me to the riverbank to teach me swimming. My whole childhood was spent in a close love affair with the river. It was my daily routine to be with the river for at least five to eight hours. From three o'clock in the morning I would be with the river; the sky would be full of stars and the stars reflecting in the river. And it is a beautiful river; its water is so sweet that people have named it Shakkar--*shakkar* means sugar. It is a beautiful phenomenon.

I have seen it in the darkness of the night with the stars, dancing its course towards the ocean. I have seen it with the early rising sun. I have seen it in the full moon. I have seen it with the sunset. I have seen it sitting by its bank alone or with friends, playing on the flute, dancing on its bank, meditating on its bank, rowing a boat in it or swimming across it. In the rains, in the winter, in the summer....

I can understand Herman Hesse's Siddhartha and his experience with the river. It happened with me: so much transpired, because slowly slowly, the whole existence became a river to me. It lost its solidity; it became liquid, fluid.

And I am immensely grateful to my father. He never taught me mathematics, language, grammar, geography, history. He was never much concerned about my education. He had ten children...and I had seen it happen many times: people would ask, "In what class is your son studying?"--and he would have to ask somebody because he would not know. He was never concerned with any other education. The only education that he gave to me was a communion with the river. He himself was in deep love with the river.

Whenever you are in love with flowing things, moving things, you have a different vision of life. Modern man lives with asphalt roads, cement and concrete buildings. These are nouns, remember, these are not verbs. The skyscrapers don't go on growing; the road remains the same whether it is night or day, whether it is a full-moon night or a night absolutely dark. It doesn't matter to the asphalt road, it does not matter to the cement and concrete buildings.

Man has created a world of nouns and he has become encaged in his own world. He has forgotten the world of the trees, the world of the rivers, the world of the mountains and the stars. *There* they don't know of any nouns, they have not heard about nouns; they know only verbs. Everything is a process.

God is not a thing but a process. *dh0503*

In my childhood I used to go early in the morning to the river. It is a small village. The river is very very lazy, as if not flowing at all. And in the morning when the sun is not yet arisen, you cannot see whether it is flowing, it is so lazy and silent. And in the morning when there is nobody, the bathers have not come yet, it is tremendously silent. Even the birds are not singing in the morning--early, no sound, just a soundlessness pervades. And the smell of the mango trees hangs all over the river.

I used to go there, to the furthest corner of the river, just to sit, just to be there. There was no need to do anything, just being there was enough, it was such a beautiful experience to be there. I will take a bath, I will swim, and when the sun will arise I will go to the other shore, to the vast expanse of sand, and dry myself there under the sun, and lie there, and sometimes even go to sleep.

When I came back my mother used to ask, "What have you been doing the whole morning?" I will say, "Nothing," because, actually, I had not been doing anything. And she will say, "How is it possible? Four hours you have not been here, how is it possible that you have not been doing anything? You must have been doing something." And she was right, but I was also not wrong.

I was not doing anything at all. I was just being there with the river, not doing anything, allowing things to happen. If it *felt* like swimming, remember, if it *felt* like swimming, I would swim, but that was not a doing on my part, I was not forcing anything. If I felt like going into sleep, I would go. Things were happening, but there was no doer. And my first experiences of satori started near that river: not doing anything, simply being there, millions of things happened.

But she would insist: "You must have been doing something." So I would say, "Okay, I took a bath and I dried myself in the sun," and then she was satisfied. But I was not, because what happened there in the river is not expressed by words: "I took a bath"--it looks so poor and pale. Playing with the river, floating in the river, swimming in the river, was such a deep experience. To say simply, "I took a bath," makes no sense about it; or to just say, "I went there, had a walk on the bank, sat there," conveys nothing.

Even in ordinary life you feel the futility of words. And if you don't feel the futility of words, that shows that you have not been alive at all; that shows that you have lived very superficially. If whatsoever you have been living can be conveyed by words, that means you have not lived at all.

When for the first time something starts happening which is beyond words, life has happened to you, life has knocked at your door. And when the ultimate knocks at your door, you are simply gone beyond words--you become dumb, you cannot say; not even a single word is formed inside. And whatsoever you say looks so pale, so dead, so meaningless, without any significance, that it seems that you are doing injustice to the experience that has happened to you. Remember this, because *Mahamudra* is the last, the ultimate experience.

Mahamudra means a total orgasm with the universe. *suprem01*

My own experience in childhood was...the flooded river of my town--nobody used to cross it by swimming when it was flooded. It was a mountainous river. Ordinarily, it was a small river, but in rainy times it was at least one mile wide. The current of the water was tremendous; you could not stand in it. And the water was deep, so there was no way to stand anyway.

I loved it. I waited for the rainy season because it always helped...there would come a moment when I would feel that I was dying, because I was tired and I could not see the other shore, and the waves were high and the current was strong...and there was no way to go back, because now the other shore was as far away. Perhaps I was in the middle; it was the same either way. I would feel so completely tired and the water would take me down with such a force that there would come a time when I would see, "Now there is no possibility of living any more." And that was the moment when I would suddenly see myself above the water and my body in the water. When it happened the first time, it was a very frightening experience. I thought I must have died. I had heard that when you die, the soul goes out of the body: "So I have gone out of the body and I am dead." But I could see the body was still trying to reach the other shore, so I followed the body.

That was the first time I became aware of a connection between your essential being and the body. It is connected just below the navel--two inches below the navel--by something like a silver cord, a silver rope. It is not material, but it shines like silver. Each time I reached the other shore, the moment I reached the other shore my being would enter into the body. The first time it was frightening; then it became a great entertainment.

When I told my parents, they said, "Someday you are going to die in that river. This is enough of a sign. Stop going into the river when it is flooded."

But I said, "I am enjoying it so much...the freedom, no force of gravitation, and seeing one's own body completely away."...

The same experience had happened in the river many times, so there was no fear....

It used to happen automatically that when the body reached the shore, my being would enter into the body. I had no idea how to enter the body; it had always happened of its own accord. *transm03*

In my childhood days I used to take my friends to the river. There was a small path by the side of the river. To walk on that edge was very dangerous; just one step taken in unconsciousness and you will fall into the river, and that was the place where the river was the deepest. Nobody used to go there, but that was my most loved spot. And I will take all my friends to come along with me to move on that narrow edge. Very few were ever ready to go along with me, but those few had really a beautiful experience. They will all report, "This is strange, how the mind stops!"

I will take my friends to the railway bridge to jump from the bridge into the river. It was dangerous, certainly dangerous; it was prohibited. There was always a policeman standing on the railway bridge because that was the place from where people used to commit suicide. We had to bribe the policeman, that "We are not committing suicide, we have just come to enjoy the jump!" And slowly slowly he became aware that these are the same people--they don't die or anything, they come again, they come again and they are not interested in suicide. In fact, he started loving us and stopped taking bribes. He said, "You can jump--I will not look at that side. Whenever you want you can come."

It was dangerous. The bridge was very high and to jump from there...And before you will reach the river there was a time between--the gap between the bridge and the river--when the mind will suddenly stop.

Those were my first glimpses of meditation; that's how I became more and more interested in meditation. I started inquiring how these moments can be made available without going to the mountains, to the river, to the bridges; how one can allow oneself to move into these spaces without going anywhere, just by closing one's eyes. Once you have tasted, it is not difficult. *ggate208*

You are asking me: *Although you were born almost enlightened, when I listen to your stories of your early life, I never get the impression that you saw yourself as a spiritual seeker. Were you looking for enlightenment, or was enlightenment a by-product of an impeccable resolve to never compromise what you felt to be true?*

There are things which cannot be sought directly. The more valuable a thing is, the more indirectly you have to go into it. In fact you have to do something else that simply prepares the situation around you--in which things like enlightenment, truth, can happen.

You cannot go seeking and searching for truth. Where will you go? Kabul? Kulu-Manali? Kathmandu? Goa?...and then back home. All seekers of truth go this route and come back home looking more foolish than before. They have not found anything.

Where will you go to seek the truth? You don't know the way, there is no map, there is no direction available. Nobody knows what, where, when it is possible to realize truth.

The real seeker of truth never seeks truth. On the contrary, he tries to clean himself of all that is untrue, unauthentic, insincere--and when his heart is ready, purified, the guest comes. You cannot find the guest, you cannot go after him. He comes to you; you just have to be prepared. You have to be in a right attitude.

I have never been spiritual in the sense that you understand the word. I have never gone to the temples or the churches, or read scriptures, or followed certain practices to find truth, or worshipped God or prayed to God. That has not been my way at all. So certainly you can say that I was not doing anything spiritual. But to me spirituality has a totally different connotation. It needs an honest individuality. It does not allow any kind of dependence. It creates a freedom for itself, whatever the cost. It is never in the crowd but alone, because the crowd has never found any truth. The truth has been found only in people's aloneness.

So my spirituality has a different meaning from your idea of spirituality. My childhood stories--if you can understand them--will point to all these qualities in some way or other. Nobody can call them spiritual. I call them spiritual, because to me they have given all that man can aspire to.

While listening to my childhood stories you should try to look for some quality in it--not just the story but some intrinsic quality that runs like a thin thread through all of my memoirs. And that thin thread is spiritual.

Spiritual, to me, simply means finding oneself. I never allowed anybody to do this work on my behalf--because nobody can do this work on your behalf; you have to do it yourself. And you cannot do it directly either, you have to create a certain milieu in which it happens. It is a happening; enlightenment, liberation, awakening, realization--all these words point towards absolutely one thing and that is a happening.

That creates a kind of fear in many people: "If it is happening, then what are we supposed to do? Whenever it will happen, it will happen." That is not so. It is a happening, but you can do much to prepare the ground for it to happen.

Preparing the ground may not look spiritual to those who do not understand. But it must be spiritual because the enlightenment has happened.

The end proves that whatever means were used were substantially right. It is the goal that proves that the way that was followed was right. *transm10*

I was from my very childhood in love with silence. As long as I could manage I would just sit silently. Naturally my family used to think that I was going to be good for nothing--and they were right. I certainly proved good for nothing, but I don't repent it.

It came to such a point that sometimes I would be sitting and my mother would come to me and say something like, "There seems to be nobody in the whole house. I need somebody to go to the market to fetch some vegetables." I was sitting in front of her, and I would say, "If I see somebody I will tell.... "

It was accepted that my presence meant nothing; whether I was there or not, it did not matter. Once or twice they tried and then they found that "it is better to leave him out, and not take any notice of him"--because in the morning they would send me to fetch vegetables, and in the evening I would come to ask, "I have forgotten for what you had sent me, and now the market is closed..." In villages the vegetable markets close by the evening, and the villagers go back to their villages.

My mother said, "It is not your fault, it is our fault. The whole day we have been waiting, but in the first place we should not have asked you. Where have you been?"

I said, "As I went out of the house, just close by there was a very beautiful *bodhi* tree"--the kind of tree under which Gautam Buddha became awakened. The tree got the name bodhi tree--or in English, *bo* tree--because of Gautam Buddha. One does not know what it used to be called before Gautam Buddha; it must have had some name, but after Buddha it became associated with his name.

There was a beautiful bodhi tree, and it was so tempting for me. There used to be always such silence, such coolness underneath it, nobody to disturb me, that I could not pass it without sitting under it for some time. And those moments of peace, I think sometimes may have stretched the whole day.

After just a few disappointments they thought, "It is better not to bother him." And I was immensely happy that they had accepted the fact that I am almost non-existent. It gave me tremendous freedom. Nobody expected anything from me. When nobody expects anything from you, you fall into a silence...The world has accepted you; now there is no expectation from you.

When sometimes I was late coming home, they used to search for me in two places. One was the bodhi tree--and because they started searching for me under the bodhi tree, I started climbing the tree and sitting in the top of it. They would come and they would look around and say, "He does not seem to be here."

And I myself would nod; I said, "Yes, that's true. I'm not here."

But I was soon discovered, because somebody saw me climbing and told them, "He has been deceiving you. He is always here, most of the time sitting in the tree"--so I had to go a little further. *tahui28*

Osho's first day at school, and Shambhu Dube

In India in those days, the educational structure began with four years of primary education--it was a separate phenomenon, under the local authorities--then three years more if you wanted to continue in the same direction. That is seven years; and then you would get a certificate....

But there was another way too, and that is what actually happened. After four years you could either continue in the same line or change: you could go to the middle school. If you continued in the same line you never learned English. Primary education ended after seven years, and you were fully educated in only the local language--and in India there are thirty recognized languages. But after the fourth year there was an opening and you could change gear. You could go to the English school; you could join the middle school as it was called.

Again it was a four-year course, and if you continued in that line then after another three years later you became a matriculate. My God! What a wastage of life! All those beautiful days wasted so mercilessly, crushed! And by the time you were a matriculate, you were then capable of going to university. Again it was a six-year course! In all, I had to waste four years in primary school, four years in middle school, three years in high school, and six years in university--seventeen years of my life!

I think, if I can make any sense out of it, the only word that comes to me, in spite of Beelzebub and his disciples doing great work--ex-disciples, I mean--the only word that comes to me is 'nonsense'. Seventeen years! And I was eight or nine when I started this whole nonsense, so the day I left the university I was twenty-six, and so happy--not because I was a gold medalist but because I was free at last. Free again. *glimps21*

I remained in my father's village for eleven years, and I was forced almost violently to go to school. And it was not a one-day affair, it was an everyday routine. Every morning I had to be forced to go to school. One of my uncles, or whosoever, would take me there, would wait outside until the master had taken possession of me--as if I was a piece of property to be passed from one hand to another, or a prisoner passed from one hand to another. But that's what education is still: a forced and violent phenomenon.

Each generation tries to corrupt the new generation. It is certainly a kind of rape, a spiritual rape--and naturally the more powerful, stronger and bigger father and mother can force the small child. I was a rebel from the very first day that I was taken to school. The moment I saw the gates I asked my father, "Is it a jail or a school?"

My father said, "What a question! It is a school. Don't be afraid."

I said, "I am not afraid, I am simply inquiring about what attitude I should take. What is the need for this big gate?"

The gate was closed when all the children, the prisoners, were inside. It was only opened again in the evening when the children were released for the night. I can still see that gate. I can still see myself standing with my father ready to register at that ugly school.

The school was ugly, but the gate was even uglier. It was big, and it was called "The Elephant Gate," *Hathi Dwar.* An elephant could have passed through it, it was so large. Perhaps it would have been good for elephants from a circus--and it was a circus--but for small children it was too big.

I will have to tell you many things about these nine years.... *glimps19*

I am standing before the Elephant Gate of my primary school...and that gate started many things in my life. I was not standing alone of course; my father was standing with me. He had come to enroll me at the school. I looked at the tall gates and said to him, "No."

I can still hear that word. A small child who has lost everything.... I can see on the child's face a question mark as he wonders what is going to happen.

I stood looking at the gates, and my father just asked me, "Are you impressed by this great gate?"

Now I take the story into my own hands:

I said to my father, "No." That was my first word before entering primary school, and you will be surprised, it was also my last word on leaving the university. In the first case, my own father was standing with me. He was not very old but to me, a small child, he was old. In the second case, a really old man was standing by my side, and we were again standing at an even larger gate....

The first gate was the Elephant Gate, and I was standing with my father not wanting to enter. And the last gate was also an Elephant Gate, and I was standing with my old professor*, not wanting to enter again. Once was enough; twice would have been too much.

The argument that had begun at the first gate lasted up till the second gate. The no that I had said to my father was the same no that I had said to my professor, who was really a father to me....

That 'no' became my tone, the very stuff of my whole existence. I said to my father, "No, I don't want to enter this gate. This is not a school, it's a prison." The very gate, and the color of the building.... It is strange, particularly in India, the jails and the schools are painted the same color, and they are both made of red brick. It is very difficult to know whether the building is a prison or a school. Perhaps once a practical joker had managed to play a joke, but he did it perfectly.

I said, "Look at this school--you call it a school? Look at this gate! And you are here to force me to enter for at least four years." That was the beginning of a dialogue that lasted for many years; and you will come across it many times, because it runs criss-cross through the story.

My father said, "I was always afraid..." and we were standing at the gate, on the outside of course, because I had not yet allowed him to take me in. He went on "...I was always afraid

that your grandfather, and particularly this woman, your grandmother, were going to spoil you."

I said, "Your suspicion, or fear, was right, but the work has been done and nobody can undo it now, so please let us go home."

He said, "What! You have to be educated."

I said, "What kind of a beginning is this? I am not even free to say yes or no. You call it education? But if you want it, please don't ask me: here is my hand, drag me in. At least I will have the satisfaction that I never entered this ugly institution on my own. Please, at least do me this favor."

Of course, my father was getting very upset, so he dragged me in. Although he was a very simple man he immediately understood that it was not right. He said to me, "Although I am your father it does not feel right for me to drag you in."

I said, "Don't feel guilty at all. What you have done is perfectly right, because unless someone drags me in I am not going to go of my own decision. My decision is 'no.' You can impose your decision on me because I have to depend on you for food, clothes, shelter and everything. Naturally you are in a privileged position."

What an entry!--being dragged into school. My father never forgave himself. The day he took sannyas, do you know the first thing he said to me? "Forgive me, because I have done so many wrong things to you. There are so many I cannot count, and there must be more which I don't know at all. Just forgive me."...

A great dialogue started with my father on that day, and it continued on and off, and ended only when he became a sannyasin. After that there was no question of any argument, he had surrendered. The day he took sannyas, he was crying and holding my feet. I was standing, and can you believe it...like a flash, the old school, the Elephant Gate, the small child resisting, not ready to go in, and my father pulling him--it all flashed by. I smiled.

My father asked, "Why are you smiling?"

I said, "I am just happy that a conflict has ended at last."

But that is what was happening. My father dragged me; I never went to school willingly....

I am happy that I was dragged in, that I never went on my own, willingly. The school was really ugly--all schools are ugly, in fact. It is good to create a situation where children learn, but it is not good to educate them. Education is bound to be ugly.

And what did I see as the first thing in the school? The first thing was an encounter with the teacher of my first class. I have seen beautiful people and ugly people, but I have never seen *something* like that again!--and underline something; I cannot call that something someone.

He did not look like a man. I looked at my father and said, "This is what you have dragged me into?"

My father said, "Shut up!" Very quietly, so that the "thing" did not hear. He was the master, and he was going to teach me. I could not even look at the man. God must have created his face in a tremendous hurry. Perhaps his bladder was full, and just to finish the job he did this man and then rushed to the bathroom. What a man he created! He had only one eye, and a crooked nose. That one eye was enough! But the crooked nose really added great ugliness to the face. And he was huge!--seven feet in height--and he must have weighed at least four hundred pounds, not less than that.

How do these people defy medical research? Four hundred pounds, and he was always healthy. He never took a single day off, he never went to a doctor. All over the town it was said that this man was made of steel. Perhaps he was, but not very good steel--more like barbed wire! He was so ugly that I don't want to say anything about him, although I will have to say a few things, but at least not about him directly.

He was my first master, I mean teacher. Because in India schoolteachers are called "masters"; that's why I said he was my first master. Even now if I saw that man I would certainly start trembling. He was not a man at all, he was a horse!

I said to my father, "First look at this man before you sign."

He said, "What is wrong with him? He taught me, he taught my father--he has been teaching here for generations."

Yes, that was true. That's why nobody could complain about him. If you complained your father would say, "I cannot do anything, he was my teacher too. If I go to him to complain, he could even punish me."

So my father said, "Nothing is wrong with him, he is okay." Then he signed the papers.

I then told my father, "You are signing your own troubles, so don't blame me."

He said, "You are a strange boy."

I said, "Certainly we are strangers to each other. I have lived away from you for many years, and I have been friends with the mango trees and the pines and the mountains, the oceans and the rivers. I am not a businessman, and you are. Money means everything to you; I cannot even count it."...

I told my father, "You understand money, and I don't. Our languages are different; and remember, you have stopped me from going back to the village, so now if there is a conflict, don't blame me. I understand something you don't, and you understand something that I neither understand nor want to. We are incompatible. Dada, we are not made for each other."

And it took nearly his whole life to cover the distance between us, but of course, it was him who had to travel. That's what I mean when I say that I am stubborn. I could not budge even a single inch, and everything started at that Elephant Gate.

The first teacher--I don't know his real name, and nobody in the school knew it either, particularly the children; they just called him Kantar Master. *Kantar* means "one-eyed"; that was enough for the children, and also it was a condemnation of the man. In Hindi kantar not only means "one-eyed," it is also used as a curse. It cannot be translated in that way because the nuance is lost in the translation. So we all called him Kantar Master in his presence, and when he was not there we called him just Kantar--that one-eyed fellow.

He was not only ugly; everything he did was ugly. And of course on my very first day something was bound to happen. He used to punish the children mercilessly. I have never seen or heard of anybody else doing such things to children. I knew of many people who had left school because of this fellow, and they remained uneducated. He was too much. You would not believe what he used to do, or that any man could do that. I will explain to you what happened to me on that very first day--and much more was to follow.

He was teaching arithmetic. I knew a little because my grandmother used to teach me a little at home--particularly a little language and some arithmetic. So I was looking out of the window at the beautiful pipal tree shining in the sun. There is no other tree which shines so beautifully in the sun, because each leaf dances separately, and the whole tree becomes almost a chorus--thousands of shining dancers and singers together, but also independent.

The pipal tree is a very strange tree because all other trees inhale carbon dioxide, and exhale oxygen during the day.... Whatever it is you can put it right, because you know that I am not a tree, nor am I a chemist or a scientist. But the pipal tree exhales oxygen twenty-four hours a day. You can sleep under a pipal tree, and not any other because they are dangerous to health. I looked at the tree with its leaves dancing in the breeze, and the sun shining on each leaf, and hundreds of parrots just jumping from one branch to another, enjoying, for no reason. Alas, they didn't have to go to school.

I was looking out of the window and Kantar Master jumped on me.

He said, "It is better to get things right from the very beginning."

I said, "I absolutely agree about that. I also want to put everything as it should be from the very beginning."

He said, "Why were you looking out of the window when I was teaching arithmetic?"

I said, "Arithmetic has to be heard, not seen. I don't have to see your beautiful face. I was looking out of the window to avoid it. As far as the arithmetic is concerned, you can ask me; I heard it and I know it."

He asked me, and that was the beginning of a very long trouble--not for me but for him. The trouble was that I answered correctly. He could not believe it and said, "Whether you are right or wrong I am still going to punish you, because it is not right to look out of the window when the teacher is teaching."

I was called in front of him. I had heard about his punishment techniques--he was a man like the Marquis de Sade. From his desk he took out a box of pencils. I had heard of these famous pencils. He used to put one of those pencils between each of your fingers, and then squeeze your hands tight, asking, "Do you want a little more? Do you need more?"--to small children! He was certainly a fascist. I am making this statement so it is at least on record: people who choose to be teachers have something wrong with them. Perhaps it is the desire to dominate or a lust for power; perhaps they are all a little bit fascist.

I looked at the pencils and said, "I have heard of these pencils, but before you put them between my fingers, remember, it will cost you very dearly, perhaps even your job."

He laughed. I can tell you it was like a monster in a nightmare laughing at you. He said, "Who can prevent me?"

I said, "That is not the point. I want to ask: is it illegal to look out of the window when arithmetic is being taught? And if I am able to answer the questions on what was being taught and am ready to repeat it word for word, then is it wrong in any way to look out of the window? Then why has the window been created in this classroom? For what purpose?--because for the whole day somebody is teaching something, and a window is not needed during the night when there is nobody to look out of it."

He said, "You are a troublemaker."

I said, "That's exactly true, and I am going to the headmaster to find out whether it is legitimate for you to punish me when I have answered you correctly."

He became a little more mellow. I was surprised because I had heard that he was not a man who could be subdued in any way.

I then said, "And then I am going to the president of the municipal committee who runs this school. Tomorrow I will come with a police commissioner so that he can see with his own eyes what kind of practices are going on here."

He trembled. It was not visible to others, but I can see such things which other people may miss. I may not see walls but I cannot miss small things, almost microscopic. I told him, "You are trembling, although you will not be able to accept it. But we will see. First let me go to the headmaster."

I went and the headmaster said, "I know this man tortures children. It is illegal, but I cannot say anything about it because he is the oldest schoolteacher in the town, and almost

everybody's father and grandfather has been his pupil once at least. So no one can raise a finger against him."

I said, "I don't care. My father has been his student and also my grandfather. I don't care about either my father or my grandfather; in fact I don't really belong to that family. I have been living away from them. I am a foreigner here."

The headmaster said, "I could see immediately that you must be a stranger, but, my boy, don't get into unnecessary trouble. He will torture you."

I said, "It is not easy. Let this be the beginning of my struggle against all torture. I will fight."

And I hit with my fist--of course just a small child's fist--on his table, and told him, "I don't care about education or anything, but I must care about my freedom. Nobody can harass me unnecessarily. You have to show me the educational code. I cannot read, and you will have to show me whether it is unlawful to look out of the window even though I could answer all the questions correctly."

He said, "If you answered correctly then there is no question at all about where you were looking."

I said, "Come along with me."

He came with his educational code, an ancient book that he always carried. I don't think anybody had ever read it. The headmaster told Kantar Master, "It is better not to harass this child because it seems that it may bounce back on you. He won't give up easily."

But Kantar Master was not that type of man. Afraid, he became even more aggressive and violent. He said, "I will show this child--you need not worry. And who cares about that code? I have been a teacher here my whole life, and is this child going to teach me the code?"

I said, "Tomorrow, either I will be in this building or you, but we cannot both exist here together. Just wait until tomorrow."

I rushed home and told my father. He said, "I was worried whether I had entered you in school just to bring trouble upon others and upon yourself, and to also drag me into it."

I said, "No, I am simply reporting so that later you don't say you were kept in the dark."

I went to the police commissioner. He was a lovely man; I had not expected that a policeman could be so nice. He said, "I have heard about this man. In fact my own son has been tortured by him. But nobody complained. It is illegal to torture, but unless you complain nothing can be done, and I cannot complain myself because I am worried that he may fail my child. So it is better to let him go on torturing. It is only a question of a few months, then my child will go into another class."

I said, "I am here to complain, and I am not concerned about going into another class at all. I am ready to stay in this class my whole life."

He looked at me, patted me on the back and said, "I appreciate what you are doing. I will come tomorrow."

I then rushed to see the president of the municipal committee, who proved to be just cow dung. Yes, just cow dung, and not even dry--so ugly! He said to me, "I know. Nothing can be done about it. You have to live with it, you will have to learn how to tolerate it."

I said to him, and I remember my words exactly, "I am not going to tolerate anything that is wrong to my conscience."

He said, "If that is the case, I cannot take it in hand. Go to the vice president, perhaps he may be more helpful."

And for that I must thank that cow dung, because the vice president of that village, Shambhu Dube, proved to be the only man of any worth in that whole village, in my experience. When I knocked on his door--I was only eight or nine years old, and he was the vice president--he called, "Yes, come in." He was expecting to see some gentleman, and on seeing me he looked a little embarrassed.

I said, "I am sorry that I am not a little older--please excuse me. Moreover, I am not educated at all, but I have to complain about this man, Kantar Master."*

The moment he heard my story--that this man tortures little children in the first grade by putting pencils between their fingers and then squeezing, and that he has pins which he forces under the nails, and he is a man seven feet tall, weighing four hundred pounds--he could not believe it.

He said, "I have heard rumors, but why has nobody complained?"

I said, "Because people are afraid that their children will be tortured even more."

He said, "Are you not afraid?"

I said, "No, because I am ready to fail. That's all he can do." I said I was ready to fail and I was not insisting on success, but I would fight to the last: "It is either this man or me--we both cannot be there in the same building."

Shambhu Dube called me close to him. Holding my hand he said, "I always love rebellious people, but I never thought a child of your age could be a rebel. I congratulate you."

We became friends, and this friendship lasted until he died. That village had a population of twenty thousand people, but in India it is still a village. In India, unless the town has one hundred thousand people it is not considered a town. When there are more than fifteen

hundred thousand people then it is a city. In my whole life I never came across another in that village of the same caliber, quality or talent as Shambhu Dube. If you ask me, it will look like an exaggeration, but in fact, in the whole of India I never found another Shambhu Dube. He was just rare....

He just loved me, and this love started at that meeting, on that day when I had gone to protest against Kantar Master.

Shambhu Dube was the vice president of the municipal committee, and he said to me, "Don't be worried. That fellow should be punished. In fact, his service is finished. He has applied for an extension but we will not give it to him. From tomorrow you will not see him in that school again."

I said, "Is that a promise?"

We looked into each other's eyes. He laughed and said, "Yes, it is a promise."

The next day Kantar Master was gone. He was never able to look at me after that. I tried to contact him, knocked at his door many times just to say goodbye, but he was really a coward, a sheep under a lion's skin. But that first day in school turned out to be the beginning of many, many things. *glimps20*

*Note: Professor Saxena, at Sagar University, see Part IV

Kantar Master was never seen at the school again. He was immediately sent on leave, because there was only one month before his retirement, and his application for an extension had been canceled. This created a great celebration in the village. Kantar Master had been a great man in that village, yet I had had him thrown out in just a single day. That was something. People started respecting me. I would say, "What nonsense is this? I have not done anything--I simply brought the man and his wrongdoing to the light."

I am surprised how he continued torturing small children his whole life. But that is what was thought to be education. It was thought then, and many Indians still think, that unless you torture a child he cannot be taught--although they may not say so clearly. *glimps21*

The second day was my real entry into the school, because Kantar Master had been thrown out and everybody was joyous. Almost all the children were dancing. I could not believe it, but they told me, "You did not know Kantar Master. If he dies we will distribute sweets for the whole town, and burn thousands of candles in our houses." I was received as if I had done a great deed....

The second day at school was as if I had done something great. I could not believe that people had been so oppressed by Kantar Master. It was not that they were rejoicing for me; even then I could see the distinction clearly. Today too, I can remember perfectly that they were rejoicing because Kantar Master was no longer on their backs.

They had nothing to do with me, although they were acting as if they were rejoicing for me. But I had come to school the day before and nobody had even said, "Hello." Yet now the whole school had gathered at the Elephant Gate to receive me. I had become almost a hero on just my second day.

But I told them then and there, "Please disperse. If you want to rejoice go to Kantar Master. Dance in front of his house, rejoice there. Or go to Shambhu Babu, who is the real cause of his removal. I am nobody. I did not go with any expectation, but things happen in life that you had never expected, nor deserved. This is one of those things, so please forget about it."

But it was never forgotten in my whole school life. I was never accepted as just another child. Of course, I was not very concerned with school at all. Ninety percent of the time I was absent. I would appear only once in a while for my own reason, but not to attend school. *glimps46*

The man I was talking about, his full name was Pandit Shambhuratan Dube. We all used to call him Shambhu Babu. He was a poet, and rare in that he was not eager to be published. That is very rare in a poet. I have come across hundreds of the tribe, and they are all so eager to be published that poetry becomes secondary. I call any ambitious person a politician, and Shambhu Dube was not ambitious.

He was not an elected vice president either, because to be elected you have to at least stand for election. He was nominated by the president, who was just holy cow dung as I have said before, and he wanted some men with intelligence to do his work. The president was an absolute cow dung, and he had been in office for years. Again and again he had been chosen by other cow dungs.

In India, to be a holy cow dung is a great thing--you become a mahatma. This president was almost a mahatma, and as bogus as they all are, otherwise they would not be mahatmas in the first place. Why should a man of creativity and intelligence choose to be a cow dung? Why should he be at all interested in being worshipped? I will not even mention the name of the holy cow dung; it is filthy. He had nominated Shambhu Babu as his vice president, and I think that was the only good thing that he did in his whole life. Perhaps he did not know what he was doing--cow dungs are not conscious people.

The moment Shambhu Babu and I saw each other, something happened: what Carl Gustav Jung calls "synchronicity." I was just a child; not only that, wild too. I was fresh from the woods, uneducated and undisciplined. We had nothing in common. He was a man of power and very respected by the people, not because he was a cow dung but because he was such a strong man, and if you were not respectful to him, some day you might suffer for it. And his memory was very very good. Everybody was really afraid of him and so they were all respectful, and I was just a child.

Apparently there was nothing in common between us. He was the vice president of the whole village, the president of the lawyers' association, the president of the Rotary Club, and so on and so forth. He was either the president or the vice president of many committees. He was

everywhere, and he was a well-educated man. He had the highest degrees in law, but he did not practice law in that village....

He never published his poetry while he was still alive. He was a great story writer too, and by chance a famous film director became acquainted with him and his stories. Now Shambhu Babu is dead but a great film has been made using one of his stories, *Jhansi ki rani*--"The Queen of Jhansi." It won many awards, both national and international. Alas he is no more. He was my only friend in that place. *glimps21*

He was a great poet. He was also great because he never bothered to publish his work. He never bothered to read at any gathering of poets. It looked strange that he would read his poetry to a nine-year-old child, and he would ask me, "Is it of any worth, or just worthless?"

Now his poetry is published, but he is no more. It was published in his memory. It does not contain his best work because the people who chose it, none of them were even poets, and it needs a mystic to choose from Shambhu Babu's poetry. I know everything he wrote. There was not much--a few articles, and very few poems, and a few stories, but in a strange way they all connect with a single theme.

The theme is life, not as a philosophical concept but as it is lived moment to moment. Life with a small 'l' will do, because he would never forgive me if you wrote life with a capital 'L'. He was against capital letters. He never wrote any word with capitals. Even the beginning of a sentence would always be written with small letters. He would even write his own name in small letters. I asked him, "What is wrong with capital letters? Why are you so against them, Shambhu Babu?"

He said, "I am not against them, but I am in love with the immediate, not the faraway. I am in love with small things: a cup of tea, a swim in the river, a sunbath.... I am in love with little things, and they cannot be written with capital letters."*glimpse21*

Shambhu Babu was well-educated, I was uneducated, when the friendship began. He had a glorious past; I had none. The whole town was shocked by our friendship, but he was not even embarrassed. I respect that quality. We used to walk hand in hand. He was my father's age, and his children were older than me. He died ten years before my father. I think he must have been about fifty at that time. This would have been the right time for us to be friends. But he was the only man to recognize me. He was a man of authority in the village, and his recognition was of immense help to me....

My father used to ask Shambhu Babu, "Why are you so friendly to that troublesome boy?"

And Shambhu Babu would laugh and say, "One day you will understand why. I cannot tell you now." I was always amazed at the beauty of the man. It was part of his beauty that he could answer by saying, "I cannot answer. One day you will understand."

One day he said to my father, "Perhaps I should not be friendly to him, but respectful."

It shocked me too. When we were alone, I said to him, "Shambhu Babu, what nonsense were you telling to my father? What do you mean by saying that you should respect me?"

He said, "I do respect you because I can see, but not very clearly, as if hidden behind a smokescreen, what you are going to be one day."

Even I had to shrug my shoulders. I said, "You are just talking rubbish. What can I be? I am already it."

He said, "There! That's what amazes me in you. You are a child; the whole village laughs at our friendship and they wonder what we talk about together, but they don't know what they are all missing. I know"--he emphasized it--"I *know* what I am missing. I can feel it a little, but I can't see it clearly. Perhaps one day when you are really grown up, I may be able to see you."*glimps21*

I was talking to you about my strange friendship with Shambhu Babu. It was strange on many counts. First, he was older than my father, or perhaps the same age--but as far as I remember, he looked older--and I was only nine years old. Now, what kind of friendship is possible? He was a successful legal expert, not only in that small place, but he practiced in the high court and in the supreme court. He was one of the topmost legal authorities. And he was a friend of a wild, unruly, undisciplined, illiterate child. When he said, on that first meeting, "Please be seated," I was amazed.

I had not hoped that the vice president would stand to receive me and would say, "Please be seated."

I said to him, "First, you be seated. I feel a little embarrassed to sit before you do. You are old, perhaps even older than my father."

He said, "Don't be worried. I am a friend of your father. But relax and tell me what you have come for."

I said, "I will tell you later on why I have come here. First..." He looked at me, I looked at him; and what transpired in that small fragment of a moment became my first question. I asked him, "First, tell me what happened just now, between your eyes and mine."

He closed his eyes. I think perhaps ten minutes must have passed before he opened them again. He said, "Forgive me, I cannot figure it out--but *something* happened."

We became friends; that was sometime in 1940. Only later on, years afterwards, just one year before he died--he died in 1960, after twenty years of friendship, strange friendship--only then was I able to tell him that the word he had been searching for had been invented by Carl Gustav Jung. That word is 'synchronicity'; that is what was happening between us. He knew it, I knew it, but the word was missing.

Synchronicity can mean many things all together, it is multidimensional. It can mean a certain rhythmic feeling; it can mean what people have always called love; it can mean friendship; it can simply mean two hearts beating together without rhyme or reason it is a mystery. Only once in a while one finds someone with whom things fit; the jigsaw just disappears. All the pieces that were not fitting suddenly fit on their own accord. *glimps22*

I was telling you about a certain relationship that happened between a child of about nine years of age and an old man of perhaps fifty. The difference in age was great, but love can transcend all barriers. If it can happen even between a man and a woman, then what other barrier could be bigger? But it was not, and cannot be described as just love. He could have loved me like a son, or like his grandson, but that was not it.

What happened was friendliness--and let it be on record: I value friendliness higher than love. There is nothing higher than friendliness. I know you must have noticed that I have not used the word 'friendship'. I was using it, but now is the time to tell you of something greater than friendship--friendliness.

Friendship can also be binding, in its own way, like love. It can also be jealous, possessive, afraid that it may be lost, and because of that fear, so much agony and so much struggle. In fact people are continuously fighting those whom they love--strange, just strange...unbelievably strange.

Friendliness rises higher, to all that man knows and feels. It is more a fragrance of being, or you can say a flowering of being. Something transpires between two souls, and suddenly there are two bodies, but one being--that is what I call flowering. Friendliness is freedom from all that is small and mediocre, from all that we are acquainted with--in fact, too acquainted with. *glimps23*

Osho's early love of books

I really did not attend primary school much, because the river was so attractive and its call was irresistible. So I was always at the river--not alone of course, but with many other students. Then there was the forest beyond the river. And there was so much real geography to explore--who bothered about the dirty map that they had in the school? I was not concerned where Constantinople was, I was exploring on my own: the jungle, the river--there were so many other things to do.

For example, as my grandmother had slowly taught me to read, I started reading books. I don't think anybody before or after me had ever been so involved in the library of that town. Now they show everybody the place where I used to sit, and the place where I used to read

and write notes. But in fact they should show people that this was the place from where they wanted to throw me out. They threatened me again and again.

But once I started reading, a new dimension opened. I swallowed the whole library, and I started reading the books that I love most to my grandmother at night. You will not believe it, but the first book I read to her was *The Book of Mirdad.* That began a long series.

Of course once in a while, she used to ask, in the middle of a book, the meaning of a certain sentence, or passage, or a whole chapter--just the gist of it. I would say to her, "Nani, I have been reading it to you, and you have not heard it?"

She said, "You know, when you read I become so interested in your voice that I completely forget what you are reading. To me, you are my Mirdad. Unless you explain it to me, Mirdad will remain absolutely unknown as far as I am concerned."

So I had to explain to her, but that was a great discipline to me. To explain, to help the other person who is willing to go a little deeper than he could go on his own, to hold him by the hand, slowly slowly, that became my whole life. I have not chosen it...

I am an unplanned man, that is why I stay still wild. Sometimes I wonder what I am doing here, teaching people to be enlightened. And once they become enlightened, I immediately start teaching them how to become unenlightened again. What am I doing? *glimps26*

I have loved many books, thousands of books, but none like Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons.* I used to force my poor father to read it. He is dead, otherwise I would have asked him to forgive me. Why did I force him to read the book? That was the only way for him to understand the gap between himself and me. But he was really a wonderful man, he used to read the book again and again, just because I said. It wasn't once he read it, but many times. And not only did he read the book, but at least between him and me the gap was bridged. We were no longer father and son. That ugly relationship of father and son, mother and daughter, and so on... at least with me my father dropped it, we became friends. It is difficult to be friends with your own father, or your own son; the whole credit goes to him, not to me. *Books13*

Leo Tolstoy's *Resurrection:* for his whole life, Leo Tolstoy was concerned, immensely concerned with Jesus, hence the title, *Resurrection.* And Leo Tolstoy has really created a tremendous work of art. It has been a bible to me. I can still see myself, when I was young, continuously carrying Tolstoy's *Resurrection* with me. Even my father became worried. "It is okay to read a book," he said to me one day, "but why do you go on carrying this book the whole day? You have read it."

I said, "Yes, I have read it, not only once but many times. But I am going to carry it with me." My whole village knew about it, that I was continuously carrying a certain book called *Resurrection.* They all thought I was mad and a madman can do anything. But why was I carrying *Resurrection* the whole day?--and not only during the day, but during the night too.

The book was with me by my bed. I loved it...the way Leo Tolstoy reflects the whole message of Jesus. He succeeds far more than any of the apostles, except Thomas... *books13*

I don't like Gorky. He is a communist, and I hate communists. When I hate I simply hate, but the book *The Mother,* even though written by Maxim Gorky, I love it. I have loved it my whole life. I had so many copies of that book that my father used to say, "Are you mad? One copy of a book is enough, and you go on ordering more! Again and again I see a postal package and it is nothing but another copy of *The Mother* by Maxim Gorky. Are you mad or something?"

I said to him, "Yes, as far as Gorky's *The Mother* is concerned, I am mad, utterly mad."

When I see my own mother I remember Gorky. *Books13*

Osho's early experiences with orthodox religions

It was a problem for me also in my childhood. My whole family was going to the temple and I was resistant. I was willing--if they could explain what this whole thing was all about. They had no explanation except, "It has been done always, and it is good to follow your elders, to follow your old generations, to follow the ancient heritage...it is good." This is not an explanation.

I told them, "I am not asking whether it is good or bad; I am asking what it is. I don't see any God, I see only a stone statue. And you know perfectly well that it is a stone statue--you know better than me, because you have purchased it from the market. So God is being sold in the market? You have installed it with your own hands in the temple; at what point did it become God?--because in the shop of the sculptor it is not worshipped. People are haggling for its price; nobody is praying to it! Nobody thinks that these are gods, because there are so many statues. And you can choose according to your liking.

"You haggled for the price, you purchased the statue, and I have been an observer all the time, waiting to see at what moment the stone statue becomes God, at what moment it is not a commodity to be purchased and sold, but a divinity to be worshipped."

They had no explanation. There *is* no explanation, because in fact it never became God; it is still a statue. It is just no longer in the shop, it is in the temple. And what is the temple?--another house.

I was asking them, "I want to participate with you in your prayers, in your worship; I don't want to remain an outsider. But I cannot do it against myself. First I have to be satisfied, and you don't give any answer that is satisfying. And what are you saying in your prayers?

"`Give us this,' `Give us that'--and do you see the whole hilarious scene? You have purchased a stone statue, installed it in a house, and now you are begging from the statue,

which is purchased by you, `Give us this,' `Give us that...prosperity to our family, health to our family.' You are behaving very strangely, in a weird way, and I cannot participate in it.

"I don't want to disobey for disobedience's sake. And this is not disobedience; I am ready to follow your order, but you are not prepared to give it to me. You never asked your own parents. They lived in ignorance, you are living in ignorance, and you want me also to live in ignorance."

They thought that I would cool down by and by. They used to take me to the temple. They would all bow down, and I would stand by the side. And my father would say to me, "Just for our sake...it doesn't look good. It looks odd that you stand by the side when everybody is bowing down with so much religiousness."

I said, "I don't see any religiousness; I simply see a certain kind of exercise. And if these people are so much interested in exercise, they can go to a gymnasium, which will *really* give them health.

"Here they are asking, `Give us health,' and `Give us wealth.' Go to the gymnasium and there you will get health, and you will have real exercises. This is not much! And you are right that it looks odd--not my standing here but you all doing all kinds of stupid rituals. *You* are odd. I may be in the minority, but I am not odd.

"And you say for your sake I should participate. Why are you not participating with me for my sake? You all should stand in a line in the corner--That will show that you really want to participate."

Finally he told me, "It is better you don't come to the temple, because other people come and they see you, and you are always doing something nasty."

I said, "What?"...because I was always sitting with my back towards God, which is not allowed--that is "nasty."

I said, "If God is omnipotent, he can change his position. Why should I be bothered about it? But he goes on sitting in the same position. If he does not want to see my back, he can move; he can start looking at the other side. I am more alive than your God, that's why you tell me to change my position; you don't tell your God. You know that he is dead."

And they said, "Don't say such things!"

I said, "What can I do? He does not breathe, he does not speak, and I don't think he hears, because a man who is not breathing, who is not seeing, who cannot move, cannot hear--all these things happen in an organic unity, and the organism has to be alive. So to whom are you praying?"

And slowly, slowly I persuaded my family to get rid of the temple. It was made by my family, but then they gave it to the community; they stopped going there. I told them, "Unless you explain it to me, your going shows that you are not behaving intelligently." *psycho12*

In India, if somebody has smallpox it is not thought to be a physical disease. Smallpox is called in India, *mata; mata* means mother goddess. And in every town there is a temple for the mother goddess, or many temples...the mother goddess is angry, that's why poor little children are suffering from smallpox.

People like Mahatma Gandhi were against vaccination because it was unnatural. Smallpox is natural. It destroys so many beautiful children's faces, their eyes, and it kills many. And the prophet of non-violence was against vaccination because he was against anything scientific--and moreover it was thought the disease is not a physiological disease, it is a spiritual anger.

One of my sisters died of smallpox, and I was very angry because I loved that sister more than any of my brothers or my sisters. I told them, "You have killed her. I have been telling you that she needs vaccination.

"I have suffered from smallpox, but at that time I could not say anything to you; I don't even remember it, it happened just in my first year. And every child suffers. When this girl was born I was insisting that she should be vaccinated. But you are all followers of Mahatma Gandhi: Vaccination is against nature. And to prevent...the anger of the mother goddess will be dangerous. It will come in some other form."

And when the girl became sick with smallpox they were doing both things: they were taking medicine from the doctor and they were continuously going to worship the mother goddess.

I said, "Then please do one thing at least; either take the medicine, or go and worship your mother. But you are being cunning; you are even deceiving the mother goddess. I am honest, I spit on your mother goddess every day"--because I used to go to the river and the temple was just on the way so there was no harm; coming and going I would spit.

And I said, "Whatsoever you do...but it is strange--I am spitting, I should suffer. Why should she suffer? And I cannot understand that the mother goddess becomes angry and small children suffer--who have not committed any crime, who have just arrived, who have not had time enough to do anything, nor are capable of doing anything. Others should suffer, but they are not suffering.

"And mother goddess you call her! You should call her a witch, because what kind of mother is she who makes small children suffer? And then you are cunning. You are also not certain; otherwise don't take the medicine. Throw all the medicines; depend completely on your mother goddess. There too you are afraid. You are trying to ride on two horses. This is sheer stupidity. Either depend on the mother and let the girl die, or depend on the medicine, and forget about that mother."

They would say, "We can understand that there is a contradiction, but please don't bring it to our notice, because it hurts."

I said, "Do you think it hurts only you, and it does not hurt me seeing my parents being stupid, silly? It does not hurt me? It hurts me more. There is still time, you can change; but on the contrary, you are trying to change me, and you call it help. You think without your help I am going to be lost. Please let me be lost. At least I will have one satisfaction, that nobody else is responsible for my being lost; it is my own doing. I will be proud of it."

Up to seven years, if a child can be left innocent, uncorrupted by the ideas of others, then to distract him from his potential growth becomes impossible. The child's first seven years are the most vulnerable. And they are in the hands of parents, teachers, priests.... *dark01*

Religions could exploit humanity for a simple reason: man feels a kind of inner unease when there are questions and there is no way to find the answer. Questions are there--man is born with questions, with a big question mark in his heart--and it is good.

It is fortunate that man is born with a question mark, otherwise he would be just another species of animal....

I am reminded of my own childhood and so many things that will help you to understand the beauty of the question mark. And unless you understand the question mark as something intrinsic to your humanity, to your dignity, you will not understand what mysticism is.

Mystifying is not mysticism.

Mystifying is what the priests have been doing.

They have taken your question mark....

This is what I was going to tell you. In my childhood they started giving me answers...because there was a special class for Jainism in the Jaina temple and every child had to attend it, one hour every evening. I refused.

I told my father, "In the first place I don't have those questions for which they are supplying answers. This is stupid. When I have questions I will go and learn their answers and try to find out whether they are correct or not. Right now I am not even interested in the question. Who created the world? My foot!--I am not interested. I know one thing for certain: I have not created it.

My father said, "You are a strange child. All the children from the family are going, from the neighborhood, everybody is going."

Jainas tend to live in a neighborhood, a close-knit neighborhood. Minorities are afraid of the majority so they remain close to each other; it is more protective. So all the children of the neighborhood go and their temple is in the middle of the neighborhood. That too is for

protection, otherwise it will be burned any day if it is in a Hindu neighborhood or in a Mohammedan neighborhood.

And it will become difficult: if there is a riot you cannot go to your own temple. And there are people who will not eat without going to the temple. First they have to go to the temple and worship, then only can they eat. So Jainas live in small sections of the town, city, village, with their temple in the middle, and surrounding it is their whole community.

"Everybody is going," my father said.

I said, "They may have questions, or they are idiots. I am not an idiot, and I don't have those questions, so I simply refuse to go. And I know what the teacher goes on teaching the children is absolute rubbish."

My father said, "How can you prove that? You always ask me to prove things; now I ask you, how can you prove what he says is rubbish?"

I said, "Come with me."

He had to go many times to many places; it was just that the arguments had to be concluded. And when we reached the school, the teacher was teaching that Mahavira had these three qualities: omnipotence, all-powerful; omniscient, all-knowing; omnipresent, everywhere-present. I said, "You have listened, now come with me to the temple." The class was just by the side of the temple, a room attached to the temple. I said, "Now come into the temple."

He said, "But what for?"

I said, "Come, I will give you the proof."

What I had done was on Mahavira's statue I had just put a *laddoo*--that is an Indian sweet, a round sweet, just like a ball--I had put a laddoo on Mahavira's head, so naturally two rats were sitting on Mahavira's head eating the laddoo. I said, This is your omnipotent Mahavira. And I have seen these rats pissing on his head."

My father said, "You are just impossible. Just to prove this you did all that!"

I said, "What else to do? How else to prove it? Because I cannot find where Mahavira is. This is a statue. This is the only Mahavira I know and you know and the teacher knows. And he is omnipresent so he must be present here seeing the rats and what they are doing to him. He could have driven those rats away and thrown away my laddoo. I was not here. I had gone to pick you up--I had all the arrangements to make. Now prove to me that this man is omnipresent. And I'm not bothered at all--he may be. Why do I care?"

But before a child even asks a question, you stuff his head with an answer.

That is a basic and major crime of all the religions.

This is what programming is, conditioning is. *person01*

One of my father's friends--he was a very good ayurvedic physician--wanted to give me a certain ancient medicine made of a very rare kind of root. It is only found in the Himalayas and even there only in very rare places. It is called *brahmaboti.* The very name means that if you go through the whole ritual of taking that medicine...It is not just a pill you can swallow, it is a whole ritual. With that root juice they write OM on your tongue. It is so bitter that one almost feels like vomiting, and you have to stand naked in the river or in the lake, water up to your neck. Then the word OM will be written, while mantras are being chanted around you by three Sanskrit scholars.

He loved me and he was sincere. It is said that if brahmaboti is used for any child before the age of twelve then he will certainly realize God in his life. *Brahma* means the ultimate, God. So he wanted to do the ritual on me.

I said, "I am surprised that you have three sons and you have not tried the ritual on them. Don't you want them to realize God? I know those three scholars who will be chanting around me have their own children. Nobody has tried it on them, so why do you want me?"

He said, "Because I love you, and I feel you may realize God."

I said, "If you feel that, then I will realize without your brahmaboti. If brahmaboti helps people to realize God, you would have given it to your children. Just out of curiosity I am willing to go through the ritual, but I absolutely doubt that it has any value. If God could be realized by such a simple method that others do to you...I don't have to do anything--just stand in the water, maybe a little shivering, for as long as your mantras are being chanted...and just a little bitter taste, perhaps some vomiting, but these are not big things to achieve God. So I want it to be clearly understood: I am skeptical of it, but out of curiosity I am ready. Just I want to know, how much time will it take me to realize God?"

He said, "The scriptures don't say anything about it."

I said, "In this life at least?"

He said, "Yes, in the same life."

So the ritual was arranged and I went through the whole torture. For almost one hour I was standing shivering in the water. And I used to think that *neem,* one of the trees in India, has the bitterest leaves, but this brahmaboti surpassed everything. I don't think anything can make you feel so bad. They wrote *Om* on my tongue; it was almost impossible to keep down because my whole stomach was upturned, and I felt like throwing up, but I did not want to disturb their ritual. And that was one of the parts of it, that you should not throw up; otherwise the whole ritual has gone wrong, nothing will happen.

After one hour I was released from that ritual. I asked the old physician, "Do you really believe this kind of nonsense can help anything, that it has any relevance to the experience

of God? Then why do people go on doing ascetic practices their whole life, self-torture, all kinds of disciplines?--this one hour torture is enough!"

He said, "That creates a question in my mind too. I have been worshipping God my whole life, and when I was writing OM on your tongue I thought, `My God! Perhaps he will realize, and I have been worshipping God my whole life--morning and evening. I am tired of it but I go on, because unless I realize I am not going to stop.' "

I said to him, "It is absolutely absurd. I don't see any logic in it except torturing small children for no reason at all." And I was not the only one, because when they arranged this whole ritual a few other rich people became aware and they had brought their sons.

There were at least nine boys standing in a row in the river because whatever is done for one, is done for nine; it takes the same time. And I said, "I know these boys; most of them are idiots. If they can realize God, then I don't want to realize, because I don't want to be in heaven with these boys. They are so idiotic that even in school if they are in my class I change the class, I go to another subject. I have never been with those people. This is for the first time--in a great effort for God-realization--that I have been standing with them."

Later a few of them dropped out before the middle school because they could not pass, and I asked the physician, "What is the matter? The people who are going to realize God could not pass a small examination! They have proved perfectly well that your ritual was an exercise in futility."

He used to be angry but he was also considerate. He said, "You have a point there, but what can I do?" One of the boys is in jail; he murdered somebody. The three who failed just have small businesses. The remaining have disappeared in the big world.

I went on asking him again and again, "What about those nine who were prepared for God-realization? Are you still thinking that they will realize God?"

Finally he said, "You are so persistent that I have to tell you, I don't believe in this ritual; it is just that it is written in the scriptures. And seeing the failure of all these people...but don't tell it to anybody."

I asked, "Why?"

He said, "Be wise."

I said, "You call it being wise?"

"Don't tell it to anybody, because everybody believes in the scriptures. Why create enemies? Keep it to yourself."

I said, "That is a way of lying."

He said, "That's true, it is a way of lying."

And I said, "All those scriptures continuously say `Be truthful.' So should I follow the scriptures or should I follow the masses?"

He said, "You create dilemmas for me. I am old and tired, and I don't want to get into any trouble. Now this is a real dilemma for me. I cannot tell you to be untrue and I cannot tell you to be truthful. I cannot tell you to be untrue because it will go against the scriptures. I cannot tell you to be true because it will endanger your life. I can simply say, `Be wise.'"

I said, "I used to think wisdom consists of being truthful, but here it seems that to be wise means to be political; to be wise means deceitful, uncaring about the truth, just thinking about your own comfort and respectability." *mystic16*

In Jainism a beautiful incident happened.

A woman named Mallibai asked the contemporary tirthankara, the contemporary Jaina master, "Why is a woman prevented?"

He said, "For the simple reason that unless you are naked and live like we live, you cannot become enlightened." And a woman certainly feels shy to be naked, particularly amongst so-called celibates.

But Mallibai was a lioness! She immediately dropped her clothes, and she said, "If nakedness is the only problem, I am naked."

And she rose to deep meditations, to such a height that Jainism had to accept her as one of the tirthankaras. But such cunningness, such callousness...they changed her name so that posterity would never know that a woman had become equal to Mahavira! They changed her name from Mallibai--*bai* means a woman--to Mallinath--*nath* means a man.

I used to harass my father, that "I want to see which one of the twenty-four statues in the temple is Mallibai."

He said, "I don't know. Don't harass me. They all are men!"

Even the statue has been made that of a man! The name has been changed, the statue is made of a man, just so that the fact that a woman has become enlightened is erased from the memory of man. *poetry04*

My sister was being married and I told my father, "If the word *kanyadan,* donation of the daughter, is being used, I will never come back to this family again. Then you can think I am dead."

He said, "But this is strange. That word has been used for centuries."

I said, "I don't care about the centuries, I care about the *meaning* of the word. You can donate things, you can donate money--you cannot donate people! And I will not allow it, even if the marriage party goes back. Let them go to hell!"

He said, "I was worried that you might create some trouble, but I had not thought about this kind of trouble. The marriage party is coming--you can hear the band, and the people are coming closer--and you ask me not to use the word `kanyadan'...! But what about the brahmin priest who will say, `Where is the father? He has to come and do kanyadan.'"

I said, "I have made arrangements with the priest before I talked to you."

The priest used to live just behind my house. There used to be a big neem tree in the middle--and it was a very narrow street--and I had spread the gossip around the town that the tree was full of ghosts. And the brahmin was very much afraid, because he had to pass through that street. He was the only person who lived behind our house, the only person who had to go through that street. And he used to ask me, "Is it true?"

I said, "Do you want to experience? I have some acquaintance with those people because I live in the house..."

And one day I managed to give him some experience....

He used to almost run in the street. From the main street he would start running saying, "Hare Krishna, Hare Rama, Hare Krishna, Hare Rama..." just to avoid the ghosts which were there. And he had just begun with, "Hare Krishna, Hare Rama..." when I gave him the experience.

I had just done a simple thing. As he was coming from his work in the town--some worship, some marriage or whatever--it must have been ten o'clock in the night, it was a dark night...I had a drum with me and a big blanket. As he came under the tree, I threw the blanket over him so he could not see what was happening, and I just banged the drum and threw the drum also over him. He got so confused at what was happening, he ran away, back down the street. And by chance, the drum fell over his head. I had not thought that it would go that way--that his head was completely covered by the drum, and underneath the drum was the blanket covering his whole body. So by the time he reached the road, people started running, thinking that the ghost had come onto the road!

He had to shout and struggle, "I am the brahmin who lives behind! I am not the ghost! It is the work of the ghost that I am in such a situation." But there was no other way. So he was always very polite and respectful of me after the experience. Whatever I said he always said, "Yes, I will do it."

I told him, "My sister is going to be married. You are not to use the word `kanyadan', because no person can be donated. It is not a gift--a human being given as a donation? If you use `kanyadan', then remember, from this day you will never be able to reach your home...*every* day those ghosts will trouble you."

He said, "I will do everything, but please no more blankets, no more drums."

So I told my father, "He is willing." *sword22*

In my childhood, one of my father's friends was a great physician in that area, and also a very learned scholar. So saints, mahatmas, scholars used to stay in his home. And because of my father's friendship with him, I was allowed in his home, there was no barrier for me--although whenever there was any guest he wanted me not to come. He used to say, "This is a strange coincidence, that whenever I want you not to come you immediately appear"--because I was constantly watching from my house so that if some saint arrived, then the second person to arrive would be me. And I found out from my very childhood...these people were almost all Vedantins, the philosophy that teaches all is illusory.

One of the famous Hindu saints, Karpatri, used to stay there. One day he was sitting; behind him was a door going inside the house. I simply dropped a book on his head. Now, a clean-shaved head...and the book was not just dropping, it was really hitting. And he said, "What are you doing?"

I said, "Nothing, it is all illusory."

The physician was not present.

He said, "Let the physician come. You should be barred from entering into this house."

I said, "Strange, you believe in the house? You believe in the physician? He is sitting there just in front of you."

He looked. He said, "There is nobody there."

I said, "It is illusory, how can you see illusions? I can see him perfectly well; he is sitting in his seat surrounded by his medicines."

He looked again.

I said, "It must be that you are getting old and you need glasses."

He said, "I can see everything else perfectly--tables, chairs, the walls--it is just the physician I cannot see." And at that very time the physician came out, and he said, "Here is the physician!"

I said, "The whole day you are talking about illusion, illusion, illusion, but in your life I don't see any impact of your philosophy. And what is the point of having a philosophy of life which is just verbal, intellectual?"

Avoid these people.

In my childhood, when these people would be giving discourses in the temple, I used to stand up--and this was one of the points I would make to them: "Don't mention that things are illusory. If you mention it, I will prove that they are not. And you know me perfectly well, because we have met at the physician's place in the morning. I have already proved it.

It started happening that they would avoid coming to my village. The physician told my father, "Saints used to come to my house. Your son is such trouble that when I go to the railway station to receive them they say, `We are not coming, because it becomes such an embarrassing situation: before thousands of people he stands up and he says he can prove...And he *can* prove, and we cannot prove, that is true. It is only a philosophy that the world is illusory.'"

Always remember that philosophies are worthless unless they can give you an insight, unless they can give you a new vision of life, unless they can transform you, unless they are alchemical. *upan31*

From my very childhood I have been continuously questioning knowledgeable people. My (parents') house was a guest house of many Jaina saints, Hindu monks, Sufi mystics, because my grandfather was interested in all of these people. But he was not a follower of anybody. He, rather, enjoyed me bothering these saints.

Once I asked him, "Are you really interested in these people? You invite them to stay in the house and then you tell me to harass them. In what are you really interested?"

He said, "To tell you the truth I enjoy their being harassed, because these guys go on pretending that they know--and they know nothing. But anywhere else it would be difficult to harass them because people would stop you. People would tell me, `Your grandson is a nuisance here--take him away.' So I invite them, and then in our own house you can do whatever you want. And you have all my support: you can ask any questions you want."

And I enquired of these people, just simple questions: "Be true and just simply tell me, do you know God? Is it your own experience or have you just heard? You are learned, you can quote scriptures, but I am not asking about scriptures: I am asking about *you.* Can you quote yourself, your experience?"

And I was surprised that not a single man had any experience of God, or of himself. And these were great saints in India, worshiped by thousands of people. They were deceiving themselves and they were deceiving thousands of others. That's why I say that knowledge has done much harm. Ignorance has done no harm. *dark09*

There was one man in India...

There were only two persons who were called Mahatma: one was Mahatma Gandhi, another was Mahatma Bhagwandin. I never agreed with Mahatma Gandhi, but with Mahatma Bhagwandin I had a great friendship. He was very old and I was so young, but we both felt some synchronicity. So whenever Mahatma Bhagwandin used to come to my city, he used to

stay in our house. He was a great scholar and immensely informed. I have never come across anybody who is so informed about so much rubbish. You ask him anything and he will function almost like the *Encyclopaedia Britannica.*

I used to go for a morning walk with him, and he would tell me about every tree: its name, its Greek name, its Latin name, its ayurvedic qualities, its medicinal purposes, its age...The first time I tolerated it; the next day when he started again I said, "Please! Because of your knowledge you cannot enjoy the walk. These beautiful trees become covered with Latin words, Greek words, Sanskrit roots, and I am not interested to know. It is enough for me that the tree is dancing in the wind, and I can hear the song and the joy. And I certainly can say that you cannot hear, you are deaf. You are a great encyclopedia, but you are not a conscious human being."

He was surprised, shocked. For half an hour he remained silent; and then he started again. As he came across a tree he said, "Look, this is the only tree that exhales oxygen in the night and inhales oxygen in the day."

I said, "My God, I have told you that I am not interested. It is enough for me that the tree is green, full of flowers and looking so beautiful in the morning sun...the dewdrops are still on the leaves. You destroy the whole beauty, you don't have any aesthetic sense! And you are an old man--you are my grandfather's friend, you are not my friend; the distance of age between me and you is half a century as far as years are concerned. But if you think of consciousness, the difference between me and you is many, many centuries!"

He said, "You are strange; I wanted to make you more informed. In life one needs knowledge, information about everything."

I said, "Who is going into that life where knowledge is a commodity, where knowledge is sold, purchased? Who is going? My interest is not in the world of names. My interest is in the hidden splendor which you are completely forgetting because of your knowledge. You are covered with your knowledge--so thick that you cannot see the light, the joy of anything. Your knowledge becomes a China Wall."

I thought he must be angry, but on the contrary--he was a very sincere man--he reported to my grandfather, "Although he has insulted me again and again on my morning walk I am not angry. I am simply happy that his interest is not in the names but in the nameless. In seventy years nobody has told me"--and he was respected all over India as a great saint--"nobody has told me, `You are wasting your life in accumulating knowledge.' This child has made me aware that I have wasted seventy years. If I live a little longer I will start learning again so that I can have some acquaintance with the nameless, with the formless, with that which is."

It happened by chance, that the day he died I was present. He died in Nagpur; I was passing from Chanda to Jabalpur. Nagpur was just in the middle, so I asked the driver to take me to Mahatma Bhagwandin, "just for half an hour and you can take a rest."

I could not believe it when I saw him. He had become an absolute skeleton. I had not seen him for almost five years.

He was dying but his eyes were showing a tremendous light. He had become only eyes; everything else had become dead, just a skeleton.

Looking at me he said, "It cannot be coincidence that you have come at the right time. I was waiting, because I wanted to thank you before I leave the body. These years have been difficult in dropping knowledge, information, and finding that which is hidden behind names. But you have put me on the right track, and now I can say all names are false, and all knowledge may be useful but is not existential, is not true. I am dying with absolute peace, the silence which you have been talking about again and again."

I had to delay because it seemed that he was going to die within a few minutes, or maybe a few hours at the most. Within five or six hours he died, but he died with such peace, with such joy. His face was so blissful, although his whole body was suffering from many diseases. But he had already got disentangled from the body; he had found himself. *livzen11*

In my neighborhood there was a temple, a temple of Krishna, just a few houses away from my house. The temple was on the other side of the road, my house was on this side of the road. In front of the temple lived the man who had made the temple; he was a great devotee.

The temple was of Krishna in his childhood--because when Krishna becomes a young man he creates many troubles and many questions, so there are many people who worship Krishna as a child--hence the temple was called the temple of *Balaji.* Balaji means...*bal* means child, and Balaji has become the name for Krishna. And then everything is simple because about his childhood you cannot raise all those questions which would be raised later on....

He becomes a politician, a warrior, manages the whole war and collects all those women--anything that you can imagine, he has done it. So in India there are many temples which are of the child Krishna....

And in India many temples are called Balaji's temple, which means Krishna in his childhood.

This Balaji's mandir was just in front of the house of the man who had made it. Because of the temple and the man's devotion, continuous devotion.... He would take a bath--just in front of the temple was a well--he would take a bath there first thing. Then he would do his prayers for hours; and he was thought to be very religious. By and by people started also calling him Balaji. It became so associated that I don't remember his real name myself because by the time I had any idea that he existed, I only heard his name as Balaji. But that cannot be his name; that name must have come because he made the temple.

I used to go to the temple because the temple was very beautiful and very silent--except for this Balaji who was a disturbance there. And for hours--he was a rich man so there was no need for him to be worried about time--three hours in the morning, three hours in the evening,

he was constantly torturing the god of the temple. Nobody used to go there, although the temple was so beautiful that many people would have gone there; they would go to a temple further away because this Balaji was too much. And his noise--it can only be called noise, it was not music--his singing was such that it would make you an enemy of singing for your whole life.

But I used to go there and we became friendly. He was an old man. I said, "Balaji, three hours in the morning, three hours in the evening--what are you asking for? And everyday?--and he has not given it to you?"

He said, "I am not asking for any material things. I ask for spiritual things. And it is not a matter of one day; you have to continue your whole life and they will be given after death. But it is certain they will be given: I have made the temple, I serve the lord, I pray; you can see even in winter, with wet clothes...." It is thought to be a special quality of devotion, to be shivering with wet clothes. My own idea is that with shivering, singing comes easier. You start shouting to forget the shivering.

I said, "My idea about it is different but I will not tell you. Just one thing I want because my grandfather goes on saying, 'These are only cowards; this Balaji is a coward. Six hours a day he is wasting, and it is such a small life; and he is a coward.'"

He said, "Your grandfather said that I am a coward?"

I said, "I can bring him."

He said, "No, don't bring him to the temple because it will be an unnecessary trouble--but I am not a coward."

I said, "Okay, we will see whether you are a coward or not."

Behind his temple there was what in India is called an *akhara,* where people learn to wrestle, do exercises, and the Indian type of wrestling. I used to go there--it was just behind the temple, by the side of the temple--so I had all the wrestlers there as my friends. I asked three of them, "Tonight you have to help me."

They said, "What has to be done?"

I said, "We have to take Balaji's cot--he sleeps outside his house--we have just to take his cot and put it over the well."

They said, "If he jumps or something happens he may fall into the well."

I said, "Don't worry, the well is not that deep. I have jumped into it many times--it is not that deep nor is it that dangerous. And as far as I know Balaji is not going to jump. He will shout from the cot; sitting in the cot, he will call to his Balaji, 'Save me!'"

With difficulty I could convince three persons: "You have nothing really to do with it. Just alone I cannot carry his cot, and I am asking you because you are all strong people. If he wakes up in the middle it will be difficult to reach to the well. I will wait for you. He goes to sleep at nine o'clock, by ten the street is empty and eleven is the right time not to take any chances. At eleven we can move him."

Only two persons turned up; one didn't turn up, so we were only three. I said, "This is difficult. One side of the cot... and if Balaji wakes up....I said, "Just wait, I will have to call my grandfather."

And I told my grandfather, "This is what we are going to do. You have to give us a little help."

He said, "This is a little too much. You have some nerve to ask your own grandfather to do this to that poor man who does no harm to anybody except that he shouts six hours a day...but we have become accustomed to it."

I said, "I have not come to argue about it. You just come, and anything that you want, anytime, I will owe it to you; you just say, and I will do it. But you have to come for this thing, and it is not much--just a twelve-foot road has to be crossed without waking up Balaji."

So he came. That's why I say he was a very rare man--he was seventy-five! He came. He said, "Okay, let us have this experience also and see what happens."

The two wrestlers started escaping, seeing my grandfather. I said, "Wait, where are you going?"

They said, "Your grandfather is coming."

I said, "I am bringing him. He is the fourth person. If you escape then I will be at a loss. My grandfather and I will not be able to manage. We can carry him, but he will wake up. You need not be worried."

They said, "Are you sure of your grandfather?--because they are almost of the same age; they may be friends and some trouble may arise. He may tell on us."

I said, "I am there, he cannot get me into any trouble. So don't you be afraid, you will not be in any trouble, and he does not know your names or anything."

We carried Balaji and put his cot over his small well. Only he used to take a bath there, and once in a while I used to jump into it, which he was very much against--but what can you do? Once I had jumped in, he had to arrange to take me out. I said, "What can you do now? The only thing is to take me out. And if you harass me, I will jump in every day. And if you talk about it to my family, then you know I will start bringing my friends to jump into it. So right now, keep it a secret between us. You take your bath outside, I take my bath inside; there is no harm."

It was a very small well, so the cot could completely fit over it. Then I told my grandfather, "You go away because if you are caught then the whole city will think that this is going too far."

And then, from far away we started throwing stones to wake him up...because if he did not wake up the whole night, he might turn and fall into the well, and something would go wrong. The moment he woke up he gave such a scream! We had heard his voice, but this...! The whole neighborhood gathered. He was sitting in his cot and he said, "Who has done it?" He was trembling and shaking and afraid.

People said, "Please get out of the cot at least. Then we will find out what has happened." I was there in the crowd, and I said,"What is the matter? You could have called your Balaji. But you didn't call him, you gave a scream and you forgot all about Balaji. Six hours training every day for your whole life...."

He looked at me and he said, "Is that too a secret?"

I said, "Now there are two secrets you have to keep. One you have already kept for many years. This is now the second."

But from that day he stopped that three hours shouting in the temple. I was puzzled. Everybody was puzzled. He stopped taking a bath in that well, and those three hours evening and morning he just forgot. He arranged a servant priest to come every morning to do a little worship and that was all.

I asked him, "Balaji, what has happened?"

He said, "I had told you a lie that I am not afraid. But that night, waking up over the well--that shriek was not mine." You can call it the primal scream. It was not his, that is certainly true. It must have come from his deepest unconscious. He said, "That scream made me aware that I am really an afraid man, and all my prayers are nothing but trying to persuade God to save me, to help me, to protect me.

"But you have destroyed all that, and what you have done was good for me. I am finished with all that nonsense. I tortured the whole neighborhood my whole life, and if you had not done that, I may have continued. I am aware now that I am afraid. And I feel that it is better to accept my fear because my whole life has been meaningless and my fear is the same."

Only in 1970, I went for the last time to my city. I had a promise with my mother's mother that when she dies--she had taken it as a promise--that I would come. So I had gone. I just went around the town to meet people and I saw Balaji. He was looking a totally different man. I asked him, "What has happened?"

He said, "That scream changed me completely. I started to live the fear. Okay, if I am a coward, then I am a coward; I am not responsible for it. If there is fear, there is fear; I was

born with it. But slowly, slowly as my acceptance grew deeper, that fear has disappeared, that cowardliness has disappeared.

"In fact I have disposed of the servant from the temple, because if my prayers have not been heard, then how is a servant's prayer going to be heard...a servant who goes to thirty temples the whole day?"because he gets two rupees from each temple. "He is praying for two rupees. So I have disposed of him. And I am perfectly at ease, and I don't bother a bit whether God exists or not. That is His problem, why should I be bothered?

"But I am feeling very fresh and very young in my old age. I wanted to see you, but I could not come, I am too old. I wanted to thank you that you did that mischief; otherwise, I would have continually prayed and died, and it was all just meaningless, useless. Now I will be dying more like a man freed, completely freed." He took me into his house. I had been there before; all the religious books were removed. He said, "I am no longer interested in all that." *ignor17*

I have come across many priests, and it was, in the beginning, a great shock to me that they are people who know nothing about religion; they are the people who know nothing of prayer; they are the people who have never meditated. They worship, but their worship is superficial--it is not of the heart--and they worship on behalf of someone else. They are servants, not really priests.

In India, every rich man has a small temple in his house. But the rich man has no time for God. Why waste time for God? In that much time, he can earn much. A priest can be purchased--and he will pray on behalf of you.

Man is so deceptive that he can deceive even himself. The god is dead; he has purchased it from the market. It is nothing but stone, carved into the shape of some unknown god who has never been seen by anyone. The god is just a thing. Of course, the richer the man, the costlier will be the god. But whether costly or not, it is a commodity. And on top of that, even the priest is a salaried servant. He has nothing to do with God--he has something to do with money. I have seen priests running from one temple to another. If a priest can manage to pray in twenty temples, then he is a rich priest.

The whole idea is so absurd and unbelievable. It is just as if you have a paid servant to love your beloved on your behalf. Perhaps one day it is going to happen--because the time you waste in loving your beloved can produce much money, much power. This game of love can be done by an ordinary servant. Why waste your time? And if the woman is also intelligent, there is no need for her to be there; she can also afford a woman servant. They both can love each other. Why waste time unnecessarily? *mess212*

I have been sitting, hiding in temples, and listening to what people are asking. I was puzzled. There is not a single thing in the world that you will not hear being asked. Somebody is after some woman, and the woman is not paying any attention to him. Offer a coconut, and God will take care of it.

In India, it is impossible to destroy *baksheesh....*

You should go to a temple--just stand by the side so nobody observes you, and watch the people who come to pray. If there is a crowd, they pray long, because so many people are seeing them--they will spread the rumor in the city that this man is very religious. If there is nobody to observe them, their prayer is a shortcut. They finish it quickly and...gone. What is the point?--nobody is watching.

I have seen the same person praying before the crowd--then he goes long--and the same person alone in the temple, unaware that I am hiding there--he quickly finishes the prayer. If there is nobody seeing him, what is the point? *mess212*

I have met thousands of people who are known as great religious masters and teachers. India is so full of sages and saints you can meet them anywhere. There is no need to seek and search. They are seeking and searching for you, and fighting: "You belong to me, not to yourself"--whosoever catches hold of you first. But they are all parts of a certain cult, repeating parrot-like--exactly parrot-like or you can say computer-like--scriptures, great words. But words only mean that which the person *has.*

The search for truth is basically the search for a living master. It is very rare that you can find the way without a master. But I allow the exception. I allow the exception because I myself never had any master.

I have met with many so-called masters, but they all wanted to get rid of me, because my presence was such a danger to their respectability. I raised questions that they could not answer. Other disciples started disappearing, and they would say, "Please, you go on and find somebody else; don't disturb our disciples. They never asked such questions before you came; now they have started asking strange questions about which we know nothing."

There are around the world many who pretend that they know. But you can see in their eyes, in their gestures, in their silences, in their words, whether they know or they are just tape recorders, quoting scriptures. *ignor18*

For example, the law of the Hindu society that divides it into four castes is absolutely unlawful, unjust. It has no reasonable support for it--I have seen *idiots* who are born in a brahmin family. Just because you are born in a brahmin family, you cannot claim superiority.

I have seen people who are born in the lowest category of Hindu law, the sudras, the untouchables, so intelligent: when India became independent, the man who made the constitution of India, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, was a sudra. There was no equal to his intelligence as far as law is concerned--he was a world-famous authority. *mess202*

The sudra is not allowed to have any education, he's not allowed to read any religious scripture. Obviously, he cannot read because he has never been in a school.

It was the British government who made a law that sudras can and should be allowed in the schools. When I was a child and I first entered school, I was surprised that a few children

were sitting outside the class. I asked, "What is the matter? Why are these children sitting out of the class?"

And the teacher told me, "They are sudras. Although the law has been enforced, we cannot drop our culture. They have to sit outside."

Even if some sudra somehow manages to learn to read, he cannot read any religious scripture. The penalty and the punishment is death. Forget all about reading religious scriptures--he cannot even *listen.* If somewhere brahmins are reciting the *Vedas,* the sudra is not allowed to listen.

This is the respect that you have given to labor. The parasites, the brahmins, are the highest caste; you have to touch their feet. *mess113*

Jainism in India, on its sacred days, ten days per year, you have to fast and you cannot eat in the night. According to Jainism you cannot eat in the night any day of the year; eating in the night is sin. When the sun sets, Jainas cannot eat. Not only that, those who are very orthodox will not drink water.

It was such a trouble in my childhood, because I was born in a Jaina family, that I simply refused. In India it is so hot, and summer nights are so hot, and you cannot even drink water. I said, "I am willing to go to hell--that will happen after death. There is time...I will do something...but right now I am going to drink. I don't want to suffer this night in hell."

In those ten days you cannot eat at all for ten days continuously. And I know that in those ten days Jainas think only of food, nothing else. Day and night, their dreams are full of food. *last209*

From my childhood I was taught a very very strict vegetarianism. I was born in a Jaina family, absolutely dogmatic about vegetarianism. Not even tomatoes were allowed in my house, because tomatoes look a little like red meat. Poor innocent tomatoes, they were not allowed. Nobody has ever heard of anybody eating in the night; the sunset was the last limit. For eighteen years I had not eaten anything in the night, it was a great sin.

Then for the first time I went on a picnic with a few friends to the mountains. And they were all Hindus and I was the only Jaina. And they were not worried to cook in the day. Mm? The mountains were so beautiful and there was so much to explore--so they didn't bother about cooking at all, they cooked in the night. Now it was a great problem for me to eat or not to eat? And I was feeling really hungry. The whole day moving in the mountains, it had been arduous. And I was really feeling hungry--for the first time so hungry in my life.

And then they started cooking. And the aroma and the food smell. And I was just sitting there, a Jaina. Now it was too difficult for me--what to do? The idea of eating in the night was impossible--the whole conditioning of eighteen years. And to sleep in that kind of hunger was impossible. And then they all started persuading me. And they said, 'There is nobody here to know that you have eaten, and we will not tell your family at all. Don't be worried.' And I was

ready to be seduced, so they seduced me and I ate. But then I could not sleep--I had to vomit two or three times in the night, the whole night became nightmarish. It would have been better if I had not eaten.

Conditioning for eighteen years that to eat in the night is sin. Now nobody else was vomiting, they were all fast asleep and snoring. They have all committed sin and they are all sleeping perfectly well. And they have been committing the sin for eighteen years, and I have committed it for the first time and I am being punished. This seems unjust! *body04*

One Jaina monk was in the town. Jaina monks sit on a very high pedestal, so that even standing you can touch their feet with your head...at least a five-foot, six-foot-high pedestal--and they sit on it. Jaina monks move in a group, they are not allowed to move alone; five Jaina monks should move together. That is a strategy so that the four keep an eye on the fifth to see that nobody tries to get a Coca-Cola--unless they all conspire. And I have seen them conspiring and getting Coca-Cola, that's why I remember it.

They are not allowed even to drink in the night and I have seen them drinking Coca-Cola in the night. In fact, in the day it was dangerous to drink Coca-Cola--what if somebody saw it!--so only in the night.... I had supplied it myself so there was no problem about it. Who else would supply them? No Jaina would be ready to do it, but they knew me, and they knew that any outrageous thing, and I would be ready to do it.

So five pedestals were there. But one monk was sick, so when I went there with my father, I went to the fifth pedestal and sat on it. I can still remember my father and the way he looked at me...he could not even find words: "What to say to you?" And he could not interfere with me, because I had not done any wrong to anybody. Just sitting on a pedestal, a wooden pedestal, I was not hurting anybody or anything....

And those four monks were in such uneasiness and they also could not say anything--what to say? One of them finally said, "This is not right. Nobody who is not a monk should sit on an equal level." So they told my father, "You bring him down."

I said, "You think twice. Remember the bottle!" because I had supplied the Coca-Cola.

They said, "Yes, that's right, we remember the bottle. You sit on the pedestal as long as you please."

My father said, "What bottle?"

I said, "You ask these people. I have a double contract: one with you and one with them, and nobody can prevent me. You all four agree that I can sit here, or I will start telling the name of the bottle."

They said, "We are perfectly satisfied. You can sit here, there is no harm--but please keep silent about the bottle."

Now, many people were there, and they all became interested...what bottle? When I came out of the temple everybody gathered; they all said, "What is this bottle?"

I said, "This is a secret. And this is my power over these fools whose feet you go on touching. If I want, I can manage to tell them to touch my feet, otherwise--the bottle...." These fools!

My father, on the way home, asked me, "You can just tell me. I will not tell anybody: what is this bottle? Do they drink wine?"

I said, "No. Things have not gone that far, but if they remain here a few days more, I will manage that too. I can force them to drink wine...otherwise I will name the bottle."

The whole town was discussing the bottle, what the bottle was, and why they had become afraid: "We have always thought that they were such spiritual sages, and this boy made them afraid. And they all agreed that he could sit there, which is against the scriptures." Everybody was after me. They were ready to bribe me: "Ask whatsoever--you just tell us what is the secret of the bottle."

I said, "It is a very great secret, and I am not going to tell you anything about it. Why don't you go and ask your monks what the bottle is? I can be there, so they cannot lie--and then you will know what kind of people you are worshipping. And these are the people who are conditioning your mind!" *ignor04*

In India many religions teach how to destroy the taste of the food before you eat it. There are many traditions in India where the monk will beg and put all kinds of things in one begging bowl, because he is not allowed to beg from just one house. And even if he begs from just one house, then in one begging bowl sweet things are there, salty things are there, all kinds of spices are there, rice is there, all kinds of dahls are there; and they all get mixed up. But that is not enough! First the monk should go to the river and dip the whole begging bowl in the river--they don't take any chances--and then mix everything...and then enjoy it! Have a nice lunch, dinner, or whatever you call it.

In fact, once it happened: I was sitting on the bank of my village river, and a monk whom I knew--he used to beg from my house too, and he was very friendly with my father, and they used to chitchat--was doing this horrible thing of dipping his begging bowl.

I said to him, "Have you ever thought of one thing? The way you enjoy your food, even a buffalo would refuse it, a donkey would refuse it."

He said, "What?"

I said, "Yes." And in India if you want to find donkeys, you will find them near the river because the washermen use donkeys to carry their clothes to the river. Only the washermen use the donkey. Nobody else even touches the donkey because the washerman is untouchable and his donkey is untouchable too. So while they are washing clothes their

donkeys are just standing on the bank of the river waiting for the washermen to load them again, and then they will start moving home.

So I said, "There is a donkey. Just give me your begging bowl; and don't be worried--if he eats it I will bring you a full bowl again from my house. If he does not eat it, you have to eat it.

He said, "I take the challenge."

I put the begging bowl in front of the donkey and the donkey simply escaped. He escaped for two reasons: one was the food, the other was me. That was not known to the monk--that any donkey would have escaped. All the donkeys of my town were afraid of me because whenever I got a chance I would ride on them--just to harass my whole village. I would go to the marketplace sitting on a donkey. The whole village used to say, "this is too much!" And I would say, "The donkey is a creation of God, and God cannot create anything bad. And I don't see what is wrong. He is a poor fellow, and nice."

So all the donkeys knew me perfectly well. It became so that even from far away, even at night, if a donkey was standing there and I was coming towards him, he would just escape. They started recognizing me. The monk was not aware that there were two reasons for the donkey running away, but he certainly saw that the donkey refused the food.

I said, "This is what your religion has been teaching you, to fall below the donkey. Even a donkey can sense that this is not food, not worth eating." *person12*

In my town there was only one church. There were very few Christians, perhaps four or five families, and I was the only non-Christian who used to visit the church. But that was not special; I used to visit the mosques, the *Gurudwara,* Hindu temples, Jaina temples. I always had the idea that everything belongs to me. I don't belong to any church, I don't belong to any temple, but any temple and any church that exists on the earth belongs to me.

Seeing a non-Christian boy coming continually every Sunday, the priest became interested in me. He said to me, "You seem to be very interested. In fact, in my whole congregation--it is such a small congregation--you seem to be the most interested. Others are sleeping, snoring, but you are so alert and listening and watching everything. Would you like to become like Jesus Christ?" and he showed me Jesus Christ's picture, of course of him hanging on the cross.

I said, "No, absolutely no. I have no desire to be crucified. And a man who is crucified must have something wrong with him; otherwise who cares to crucify anybody? If his whole country, his people, decided to crucify him, then that man must be carrying something wrong with him. He may be a nice man, he may be a good man, but something must have led him to crucifixion. Perhaps he had a suicidal instinct.

"The people who have suicidal instincts are not generally so courageous as to commit suicide, but they can manage to get others to murder them. And then you will never find that

they had a suicidal instinct, that they prompted you to kill them so that the responsibility falls on you."

I said, "I don't have any suicidal instinct in me. Perhaps he was not a suicidal man but certainly he was some kind of masochist. Just looking at his face--and I have seen many of his pictures--I see him looking so miserable, so deadly miserable, that I have tried standing before a mirror and looking as miserable as he looks, but I have failed. I have tried hard, but I cannot even make his face; how can I become Jesus Christ? That seems to be impossible. And why should I become Jesus Christ?"

He was shocked. He said, "I thought you were interested in Jesus."

I said, "I am certainly interested, more interested than you are, because you are a mere preacher, salaried. If you don't get a salary for three months you will be gone, and all your teaching will disappear." And that's what finally happened, because those Christian families were not permanent residents of the town--they were all railway employees, so sooner or later they got transferred. He was left alone with a small church that they had made. Now there was nobody to give money, to support him, nobody to listen to him except me.

On Sundays he used to say, "Dear friends--"

I would say, "Wait! Don't use the plural. There are no friends, just 'dear friend' will do. It is almost like two lovers talking; it is not a congregation. You can sit down--nobody is there. We can have a good chitchat. Why unnecessarily go on standing for one hour, and shout and...?"

And that's how it happened. Within three months he was gone, because if you don't pay him.... Although Jesus says, "Man cannot live by bread alone," man cannot live without bread either. He needs the bread. It may not be enough, he needs many more things, but many more things come only later on; first comes the bread.

Man certainly can live by bread alone. He will not be much of a man--but who *is* much of a man? But nobody can live without bread, not even Jesus.

I was going into the mosque, and they allowed me, because Christians, Mohammedans--these are converting religions; they want people from other folds to come to their fold: They were very happy seeing me there--but the same question: "Would you like to become like Hazrat Mohammed?" I was surprised to know that nobody was interested in my just being myself, helping me to be myself.

Everybody was interested in somebody else, the ideal, their ideal, and I have only to be a carbon copy? God has not given me any original face? I have to live with a borrowed face, with a mask, knowing that I don't have any face at all? Then how can life be a joy? Even your face is not yours.

If you are not yourself, how can you be happy?

The whole existence is blissful because the rock is rock, the tree is tree, the river is river, the ocean is ocean. Nobody is bothering to become somebody else; otherwise they would all go nuts. And that's what has happened to man.

You are being taught from the very childhood not to be yourself, but the way it is said is very clever, cunning. They say, "You have to become like Krishna, like Buddha," and they paint Buddha and Krishna in such a way that a great desire arises in you to be a Buddha, to be a Jesus, to be a Krishna. This desire is the root cause of your misery.

I was also told the same things that you have been told, but from my very childhood I made it a point that whatsoever the consequence I was not going to be deviated from myself. Right or wrong I am going to remain myself. Even if I end up in hell I will have at least the satisfaction that I followed my own course of life. If it leads to hell, then it leads to hell. Following others' advice and ideals and disciplines, even if I end up in paradise I will not be happy there, because I will have been forced against my will.

Try to understand the point. If it is against your will, even in paradise you will be in hell. But following your natural course of being, even in hell you will be in paradise.

Paradise is where your real being flowers.

Hell is where you are crushed and something else is imposed on you. *misery15*

Hajj is the Mohammedan's holy pilgrimage, and Mohammed has said at least once in a life every Mohammedan has to do hajj. If you miss hajj you will not be allowed into paradise. So truth is not important, love is not important, compassion is not important; what is important is a pilgrimage to Mecca. And you can do everything else you want, but you should do hajj. Once a person does hajj he is called hajji. And that is a title that makes his paradise a certainty; all hajjis go to paradise. So even poor Mohammedans....

In my village I have seen such poor Mohammedans collecting money, eating only one time a day so that at least once in their whole life...because it will need their life's savings. And I have seen people selling their houses, their land, borrowing money and remaining always in debt because they could not even pay the interest--there was no question of paying the original money. And they have taken it at such high interest; nobody is going to give it to them at a low interest because everybody knows the money is never coming back. And there is every possibility that this man may die because hajj, in the old days, was almost a suicidal pilgrimage. Now it is a little better, but not much better.

So at such a high interest, perhaps twenty-five percent per month, they have sold themselves for their whole lives, they have become slaves. Their house is gone, their land is gone, and whatsoever they earn they have to give in interest; but people will take this risk because without becoming a hajji there is no hope. *person19*

There are Mohammedans in India...You will be surprised to know that India is not a Mohammedan country, but India has the largest population of Mohammedans in the whole

world; no other country has a bigger population of Mohammedans. They have a certain festival every year in which they believe that the saints can be called back in a trance-like state in people. So in every place where there is a grave of a saint, many people will go into trance. And sometimes a few people will start speaking in trance. You can ask questions and they will answer, and it is thought that those answers are being given by the spirit of the saint.

I never believed it for the simple reason...in the first place whatever I had heard about the saint did not convince me that he was a saint. Simple qualities which are needed just to be human, even those were not there. For example, Mohammedans are all meat eaters. And they become saints if they convert many Hindus--even at the point of the sword, even if they kill to convert people. They have many wives, and most are Hindu women forcibly brought to their house--and Hindus are in a totally different world. If a woman has spent the night in a Mohammedan's house, she cannot be accepted back; she has fallen. So there is no way for her other than to become a Mohammedan or commit suicide. Her family's door is closed.

So whatever I had heard about a saint in my birthplace, I didn't feel that there was anything saintly in it. And moreover, Mohammedans, just like Christians and Jews, believe only in one life, and I cannot accept that because it is my own experience that lives are continuously coming one after another. You don't have one life; you have many, hundreds, thousands. So when a person dies, whether he believes in one life or not doesn't matter, he will have to be born into another life. So after three hundred years, who is going to come?

I was very young. I must have been ten years old when I became interested in this phenomenon of trance, in the people who were going into trance and answering. And people were worshipping them, bringing fruits and sweets, and rupees and clothes. I would just sit by their side with a long needle and go on jabbing the needle, and they would go on trying hard to keep me from doing that--and they are in trance! They are replying and in the middle of the reply they will just...because my needle was there!

They have a certain...They bring the coffin of the saint out of the grave and the one who goes the deepest in trance, he takes it on his waist--they have certain arrangements--he holds it. There are ropes, four ropes; four other people are holding those four ropes and he dances. And I would go on doing my work, because it is a crowd thing. And certainly he would dance more; he would jump higher than anybody else. He would be angry with me, but he would get more sweets and more rupees and more clothes, and more people would be worshipping him. In fact he would become the topmost person, the one who has gone deepest into the trance.

And afterwards he would meet me and he would say, "It hurts, but no harm. You can come..."

I said, "In fact you should share. Those things have come to you because of my needle, not because of your trance. And if you don't share, I can change people; I can go to any other. There are fifteen people dancing."

"No, no," he would say. "Don't go. You can take your share. Without you I cannot manage."

It became...others became also aware, what is the point? Wherever this boy is, only there the spirit comes. So others asked me, "What is the reason that wherever you are the spirit comes?"

I said, "I am a spiritual person. If you want to have a taste, I can give it in your side. People will come. But don't get angry at me."

None of them was in trance. I tried all of them. None of them was in trance; they were all pretending. But thousands of people believe.

One can go into trance but it is really a kind of deep hypnosis. It can't do any harm to you, but it has nothing spiritual in it. And it is never a superconscious state.

I became so much known to these people that one day before the festival they would start coming to me: "Please help me. Don't go to anybody else. I promise, half and half we will share. But you have to promise to come to me."

I said, "Don't be worried. I will see, because I have many other clients. Who is going to give me more and who is strong enough because this needle...for one or two hours I have to go on giving injections. An ordinary man may break down and may simply shout, `I don't want all this. Stop! This needle is too much.' "

A few of them came to me and said, "Can't you bring a smaller needle?"

I said, "No, this is a special needle. Without it I cannot work."

My father said, "Why do these Mohammedans come to you?--and just before their festival?" That day he had been watching. He said, "I have seen almost ten persons come to you and I don't see the point. Why?"

I said, "You don't know." I showed him the needle.

He said, "I cannot connect."

I said, "This is their trance."

He said, "My God, so you are doing this business!"

I said, "They are doing business. I am just a partner. And my work is very simple. I just have to keep the person dancing higher than others, giving him more and more energy with the needle. Naturally more people are attracted towards him. Others by and by slow down, seeing that nobody is coming to them. He becomes the center of the whole festival. And if they offer me half of their share...?"

He said, "You are strange. I have been telling you to come to the temple. You won't come, and you have started going to the mosque to do this business. And this business...if

somebody comes to know about it, it can create a riot in the town--that you are disturbing their people who are in trance."

I said, "You don't be worried. Nobody can say this, because I know all of them, and they are all dependent on me. Their trance is dependent on my needle. Before I entered into this business, they were just jumping slowly because the dead body is too much of a weight. They need some energy."

My father said, "I don't understand you. You call this needle energy?"

I said, "You should come and see"--and he came. He saw me, and he saw that it was true that the person I was with had the most presents and he was jumping high, higher. He could see on his face...each time I had to use the needle his face would go--because it was a big needle. But it was a question of competition, too. Those fifteen people...and nobody said anything to anybody else, because then they would be exposing themselves--that they were all fake, nobody was true.

In all the Mohammedan countries around the world this goes on happening every year, and millions of people are befooled--there is no trance.

Trance is possible but for that you need a certain training in auto-hypnosis. Or, you may have a natural tendency of falling unconscious. *mystic13*

Village entertainment

One of the greatest losses to India happened when India became divided from Pakistan, and that was the last thing the politicians ever thought about.

In my childhood I encountered it almost every day, because all over the country the streets were full of magicians.

I have seen with my own eyes things which even today I cannot figure out how they were managing. Of course there were tricks behind them; there was no miracle, neither were they claiming that they were performing miracles. They were simple people, poor people, not arrogant, but what they were doing was almost a miracle.

I have seen magicians in my childhood putting a small plant of a mango tree, just six inches high at the most.... In front of everybody they would dig the hole, put in the plant, then cover the plant and then chant in gibberish so you cannot understand what they are saying. The pretension is that there is some communication between them and the hidden plant.

The moment they remove the cover, that six inch mango plant has ripe mangoes. And they would invite people--you could come close, you could see that those mangoes were not in any way tied on. People would come and see and they would say that they are grown, not attached.

The magician would offer those mangoes to a few people so that they could taste that they were not false or illusory--and people would taste them and say, "We have never tasted such sweet mangoes in our whole life!" And there was no claim for any miracle.

I have seen magicians bringing from their bellies big round balls of solid steel. They would be so big it was difficult to take them out of their mouths--people were needed to pull them out of their mouths--and they were so heavy that when they were thrown on the earth they would make a dent.

The magician would go on bringing bigger and bigger balls.... It was a trick--but how were they managing it? And they would throw those big balls, almost the size of a football--they would throw them in the air and they would fall and create such a big dent in the earth. They would tell people, "You can try"--and people would try, but they were so heavy that it was difficult to pick them up. And they all have come--a dozen or more, all around--from the belly of the magician.

He would show, half naked, the upper part of his body naked--he would show that the ball was moving upwards. You could see that the ball was moving upwards, that it was stuck in his throat, and you could see and you could go and touch and feel that the ball was inside. Then, with great difficulty, he would bring it into his mouth and he would cry, tears coming, and ask people somehow to take it out, because he is not able. They would destroy all his teeth to help him--and the miracle was that as they were taking it out, the ball was becoming bigger. By the time it was completely out, it was so big that that man's belly could not contain even a single ball, to say nothing of one dozen balls.

But all these magicians were Mohammedans, because it was not a very creditable job. These were street people. Because of the division of Pakistan, all those Mohammedan magicians have moved to Pakistan. They were coming from faraway Pakhtoonistan, Afghanistan. But now the roads are closed; now you don't see the magicians anywhere.

Otherwise it was almost an everyday affair--in this marketplace, in that street, near the school, anywhere where they thought they could gather a crowd.

I have seen with my own eyes something which sometimes I wonder whether I have seen it or dreamed it. I have not dreamed for thirty-five years...but the thing is such that it is absolutely unbelievable that it really happened.

A magician came to our school. The school was a very big school, with almost one thousand students and nearabout fifty teachers. Even the principal of the school, who was a postgraduate in science, first rejected the man: "We don't want any nonsense here."

But I had seen that man doing impossible things, and I told him, "You wait." I went into the office of the principal and said, "You are missing a tremendous opportunity. You are a scientist.... I know this man; I have seen him performing. I can ask him to do the best that he can, and what is the harm? After school time, those who want to see can stay."

Those magicians were so poor that if you could give them five rupees, that was too much. I told the magician that I had convinced the principal, he was ready to allow it after school--"but you have to do the greatest trick that you know. On your behalf I have promised--and he is a man of scientific mind, so be careful. There will be fifty graduates, postgraduates, so you have to be very alert. You should not be caught, because it is also a question of my prestige."

He said, "My boy, don't you be worried."

And he did such a thing that my principal called me and said, "You should not associate with such people. It is dangerous."

I said, "Have you any idea what he did?"

He said, "I don't have any idea, and I can't even believe that this has happened."

The magician threw up a rope which stood in the air just like a pillar--a rope which has no bones, nothing, it was just coiled and he had carried it on his shoulder--ordinary rope. He went on uncoiling it and throwing it out, and soon we could not see the other end. What happened to the other end?

All magicians used to have a child who was their helper. He called the boy, "Are you ready to go up the rope?"

The boy said, "Yes, master"--and he started climbing the rope. And just as the other end of the rope had disappeared, at a certain point the boy also disappeared. Then the magician said to the crowd, "I will bring the boy down, piece by piece."

I was sitting by the side of the principal. He said, "Are you going to create some trouble for me? If the police come here and see that a boy is cut into pieces...."

I said, "Don't be worried, he is just performing a magic trick. Nothing is going to be wrong. I have been watching him in many shows--but this I have never seen."

The magician threw a knife up and one leg of the boy came down, and everybody was almost breathless. He went on throwing knives...another leg...one hand...another hand...and they were lying there on the ground in front of us, not bleeding at all, as if the boy was made of plastic or something. But he was speaking...he was doing all the things the magician was saying. Finally came his body, and just the head remained.

My principal said, "Don't cut his head!"

I said, "Don't be worried. If he has cut him...what does it mean? If the police come, you will be caught."

He said, "I was saying from the very beginning, no nonsense here, and now you are talking about police. I have always been suspicious of you; perhaps you may have informed the police beforehand to come at the right time."

I said, "Don't be worried."

And then the magician shouted into the sky, "Boy, only your head is there; let it drop." The head came rolling down, and he started putting the boy together again. He joined him perfectly well, and the boy started collecting his things and said, "What about the rope? Should I start pulling it back?" The magician said, "Yes"--and the boy started pulling the rope back and coiling it.

I had only heard about the rope trick, which is world famous. Akbar mentions in his *Akbar Nama,* his autobiography. Since Akbar it has been a rumor in the air that there are magicians who can perform it, but no authoritative account is available. One British viceroy, Curzon, mentions in his memoirs that he saw the rope trick in New Delhi before his whole court.

I was making every effort to find some magician--so many magicians were passing through my village, and I would ask them, "Can you perform the rope trick?"

They said, "It is the ultimate, and only very rare masters in magic can do it."

But this man--I had not asked him particularly for the rope trick, but he did it. Even today I cannot believe it. I can see the whole scene, I can see the principal freaking out--and all the magician got was five rupees.

Magic simply means something unbelievable, so absurd, so irrational that you cannot find a way to figure it out. *satyam18*

Call it meditation, call it awareness, call it watchfulness--it all comes to the same: that you become more alert, first about your conscious mind, what goes on in your conscious mind.... And it is a beautiful experience. It is really hilarious, a great panorama.

In my childhood in my town there were no movies, talkies. There was no cinema hall. Now there is, but in my childhood there was not. The only thing that was available was that once in a while a wandering man would come with a big box. I don't know what it is called. There is a small window in it. He opens the window, you just put your eyes to it and he goes on moving a handle and a film inside moves. And he goes on telling the story of what is happening.

Everything else I have forgotten but one thing I cannot forget for a certain reason. The reason, I know, was because it was in all those boxes that came through my village. I had seen every one, because the fee was just one paise. Also the show was not long, just five minutes. In every box there were different films, but one picture was always there: the naked

washerwoman of Bombay. Why did it used to be in every one?--a very fat naked woman, the naked washerwoman of Bombay. That used to be always there...perhaps that was a great attraction, or people were fans of that naked washerwoman; and she was really ugly. And why from Bombay?

If you start looking...just whenever you have time, just sit silently and look at what is passing in your mind. There is no need to judge, because if you judge, the mind immediately changes its scenes according to you. The mind is very sensitive, touchy. If it feels that you are judging, then it starts showing things that are good. Then it won't show you the naked washerwoman of Bombay, that picture will be missed out. So don't judge, then that picture is bound to come. *ignor26*

When films were shown for the first time in small villages people started throwing money, as is the custom in villages. If there is a drama company or something, someone dancing, they throw money. They started throwing money at films in small villages. I have seen people in small villages throwing money--at the screen--a dancing girl dances, they start throwing money. When a dancing girl dances and her petticoat begins to rise up in the dance, they bend down and start looking from below. There is nothing there, just a play of light and shadow. But people, people just like other people. This is how their whole life is. *death05*

Have you ever gone to see a drama, not from the audience, but backstage where actors and actresses dress themselves up and prepare themselves? Then you will be surprised.

That was one of my hobbies in my childhood, to somehow get backstage. In my village every year they used to play *Ramleela,* the great story of Rama. And it is far more beautiful if you see what happens at the back. I have seen Sita, the wife of Rama... In India she is worshipped as the greatest woman ever born, absolutely virtuous, pure. It is impossible to conceive of a purer woman or a purer love. It is absolutely impossible to conceive of a more religious, more pious, more holy woman. But at the back of the stage I have seen Sita before she goes on the stage--smoking beedies!...

Just to prepare herself, just to give herself a shot of nicotine, Sita was smoking beedies. It was so absurd. I enjoyed it so much!

And Ravana, the man who is the criminal in the drama of Rama's life, who steals Sita and who represents evil in India, was telling Rama, 'You be aware! Last night you were continuously looking at my wife in the audience, and if I see you doing that again I will teach you a lesson!'

Now, Rama is the incarnation of God, but in the drama he was just a schoolboy--and schoolboys are schoolboys. And Ravana teaching him, evil incarnate teaching God...'Don't look at my wife--that is not right!'

I enjoyed being backstage so much that what happened on the stage looked very ordinary.

When you become a witness you enter the backstage of life--and there things are *really* absurd--you start seeing things as they are. Everything is illogical, nothing makes sense. But that is the beauty of life: that nothing makes sense. If everything made sense, life would be a boredom. Because nothing makes sense, life is always a constant joy, a constant surprise. *lotus04*

In my village, as happens all over the East, every year Ramleela was played--the life of Rama.

The man who used to play the part of Ramana, the enemy of Rama who steals Rama's wife, was a great wrestler. He was the champion of the whole district, and the next year he was going to stand for the championship of the whole state. We used to take a bath in the river almost simultaneously in the morning, so we became friends. I told him, "Every year you become Ramana, every year you are being deceived. Just the moment that you are going to break Shiva's bow so that you can get married to Sita, the daughter of Janaka, a messenger comes running in and informs you that your capital of Sri Lanka is on fire. So you have to go, rush back to your country. And meanwhile, Rama manages to break the bow and marry the girl. Don't you get bored every year with the same thing?"

He said, "But this is how the story goes."

I said, "The story is in our hands if you listen to my suggestion. You must have seen that most of the people are asleep because they have seen the same thing year after year, generation after generation--make it a little juicy."

He said, "What do you mean?"

I said, "This time you do one thing I say."

And he did it!

When the messenger came with the message: "Your capital, the golden Sri Lanka, is on fire, you have to get there soon," he said, "You shut up, idiot"--he spoke in English!

That's what I had told him! All the people who were asleep woke up: "Who is speaking English in the Ramleela?"

And Ramana said, "You go away. I don't care. You have deceived me every year. This time I am going to marry Sita."

And he went and broke the bow of Shiva to pieces, and threw it into the mountains--it was just a bamboo bow. And he asked Janaka, "Bring...where is your daughter? My jumbo-jet is waiting!"

It was so hilarious. Even after forty years, whenever I meet somebody from my village, they remember that Ramleela. They said, "Nothing like that has ever happened."

The manager had to drop the curtains. And the man was a great wrestler, and at least twelve people had to carry him out.

That day the Ramleela could not be played. And next day they had to change Ramana; they found another person.

By the river, Ramana met me. He said, "You disturbed my whole thing."

I said, "But did you see the people clapping, enjoying, laughing? For years you have been playing the part and nobody has clapped, nobody has laughed. It was worth it!"

Religion needs a religious quality. A few qualities are missing. One of the most important is a sense of humor.

They stopped me meeting their actors. They made it clear to every actor that if anybody listened to me or met me, he would not be allowed to act. But they forgot to tell one man who was not an actor....

He was a carpenter. He used to come to do some work in my house also. So I said to him, "I cannot approach the actors this year. Last year was enough! Although I did no harm to anybody--everybody loved it, the whole city appreciated it. But now they are guarding every actor and they don't allow me close to them. But you are not an actor. Your function is some other work. But *you* can help me."

He said, "Whatever I can do, I will do, because last year it was really great. Can I be of some help?"

I said, "Certainly."

And he did it!

In the war, Lakshmana, Rama's younger brother, gets wounded by a poisonous arrow. It is fatal. The physicians say that unless a certain herbal plant from the mountain Arunachal is brought, he cannot be saved, by the morning he will be dead. He is lying down on the stage unconscious. Rama is crying.

Hanuman, his most devoted follower, says, "Don't be worried. I will go immediately to Arunachal, find the herb, bring it before the morning. I just want some indications from the physician how to find it, how it looks. There may be so many herbs on the Arunachal, and the time is short, soon it is night."

The physician said, "There is no difficulty. That special herb has a unique quality. In the night it radiates and is full of light so you can see it. So anywhere you see a luminous herb you can bring it."

Hanuman goes to Sri Arunachal, but he is puzzled because the whole of Arunachal is full of luminous herbs. It is not the only herb that has that special quality. There are many other herbs which have the same quality of being luminous in the night.

Now the poor Hanuman--he is just a monkey--is at a loss what to do. So he decides to take the whole mountain, and put the mountain there in front of the physician to find the herb.

The carpenter was on top of the roof. He had to pull the rope on which Hanuman comes with a cardboard mountain with lighted candles. And I had told him, "Stop exactly in the middle. Let him hang there, with the mountain and everything!"

And he managed it!

The manager rushed out. The whole crowd was agog with excitement at what was happening. And Hanuman was perspiring, because he was hanging on the ropes with the mountain also in the other hand. Something had got stuck in the wheel on which the rope was going to be rolled. The manager rushed up. He asked the carpenter...and the carpenter said, "I don't know what has gone wrong. The rope has got stuck somewhere."

In a hurry, finding nothing, the manager cut the ropes, and Hanuman with his mountain fell on the stage. And naturally he was angry. But the thousands of people were immensely happy. That made him even more angry.

Rama continued repeating the lines he had been told to say. He said, "Hanuman, my devoted friend..."

And Hanuman said, "To hell with your friends! Perhaps I have fractures."

Rama went on saying, "My brother is dying."

Hanuman said, "He can die any moment. What I want to know is, who cut the rope? I will kill him."

Again the curtain had to be dropped, the Ramleela postponed. And the manager and the people who were organizing all approached my father saying, "Your son is destroying everything. He's making a mockery of our religion."

I said, "I'm not making a mockery of your religion. I'm simply giving it a little sense of humor."

I would like people to laugh. What is the point of repeating an old story every year? Then everybody is asleep because they know the story, they know every word of it. It is absolutely pointless.

But it is very difficult for the old traditionalists, the orthodox people to accept laughter. You cannot laugh in a church. *sword04*

I was learning, but not in school, and I never repented for it. I learned from all kinds of strange people. You cannot find them working in schools as teachers; that is not possible. I was with Jaina monks, Hindu *sadhus,* Buddhist *bhikkhus,* and all kinds of people one is not expected to associate with.

The moment I became aware that I was not supposed to associate with somebody, that was enough for me to associate with that person, because he must be an outsider. Because he was an outsider, hence the prohibition--and I am a lover of outsiders.

I hate the insiders. They have done so much harm that it is time to call the game off. The outsiders I have always found a little crazy, but beautiful--crazy yet intelligent. Not the intelligence of Mahatma Gandhi--he was a perfect insider--nor is it the intelligence of the so-called intellectuals: Jean-Paul Sartre, Bertrand Russell, Karl Marx, Hugh Bach...the list is endless. *glimps46*

Other villagers

Just nearby is sitting Narendra. His father had a strange disease: six months he used to be mad and six months he used to be sane--a great balance of enjoying both worlds. Whenever he was sane he was always sick, always grumpy. He would lose weight, and he would fall victim to all kinds of infection; all his resistance to disease would be lost. And in the six months when he was mad, he was the healthiest person you could find--no disease, no infection--and he was always happy.

The family was in trouble. Whenever he was happy the family was in trouble, because his happiness was a certain indication that he was mad. If he was not going to the doctors, if he was enjoying his health--he was mad.

While he was insane, he would get up early in the morning, four o'clock, and wake up the whole neighborhood saying, "What are you doing? Just go for a morning walk, go to the river, enjoy swimming. What are you doing here in bed?"

The whole neighborhood was tortured...but he enjoyed it. He would purchase fruits and sweets and say, "You can come to my shop and get your money." Naturally--Narendra was very small, his other brothers were even smaller--even the smallest children were watching him, that he does not steal the money. But whether they watched or not, he would go on distributing fruits and sweets to people and saying to them, "Rejoice! Why are you sitting so sad?" Naturally, they had to pay money to all kinds of people.

It was a very strange situation. Children steal money, and fathers, grandfathers, prevent them. In Narendra's house, the situation was just the opposite: the father used to steal money, and the small children would shout for the mother: "He is taking money again!"

And by the time the mother was there, he was gone--gone to the market to purchase sweets, fruits, or anything whatsoever, wholesale! He was not concerned with small things--just wholesale purchase and distributing. And everybody loved it, but everybody was tortured, also.

Once it happened that he escaped while he was insane. He had just gone to the station, and the train was there, so he sat in the train. One thing just led to another...and he reached Agra.

In India there is a sweet; its name is such that it can create trouble, and it created trouble for him. He was feeling hungry, so he went to a shop and he asked what it was, and the man said, "Khaja." *Khaja* in Hindi means two things: it is the name of that sweet, and it also means, "Eat it"...so he ate it.

The man could not believe it. He said, "What are you doing?"

He said, "What you said."

He was dragged to the court because, "This man seems to be strange. First he asked the name, and when I said 'khaja,' he started eating it!"

Even the magistrate laughed. He said, "The word has both meanings. But this man seems to be insane--because he seems so happy, so healthy." Even in the court he was enjoying everything--no fear, no sign of fear. He was sent to a madhouse for six months, and he asked happily, "Only six months?"

He was sent to Lahore--in those days Lahore was part of India--and just by coincidence.... There was some cleaning stuff for bathrooms; after four months in the Lahore madhouse he drank the whole drum of that cleaning stuff and it gave him vomits and motions. For fifteen days he could not eat anything...but it cleaned his whole system--so he became sane!

And then began a great period of difficulty. He went to the superintendent and said, "Just because of drinking that stuff, for fifteen days I could not eat anything, and my whole system has been cleaned. I have become sane."

The superintendent said, "Don't bother me, because every mad person thinks he is sane."

He tried his best to convince him, but the superintendent said, "This is the whole business here every day--every madman thinks he is sane."

He was telling me that those two months were really very troublesome. Those first four months were perfectly beautiful: "Somebody was pulling my leg, or somebody was cutting my hair--it was all okay. Who cares?--somebody was sitting on my chest...so what?

"But when I became sane, and the same things continued--now I could not tolerate it if somebody was sitting on my chest, somebody was cutting my hair, somebody has cut half my mustache.... "

They were all mad people. Amongst those mad people he was the only one who was sane. No mad person ever accepts that he is mad. The moment he accepts he is mad, sanity has started coming. *spirit07*

But superstitions....

You go for a morning walk and you meet a man with only one eye--finished, your whole day is finished. Now nothing can be right. Strange...what does that poor fellow have to do with your whole day? But a superstition, centuries old....

I had a small boy in my neighborhood with only one eye. Whomsoever I wanted to torture...early in the morning I would take the boy and just give him chocolates, and he was ready. I would watch from far away: "You just stand in front of the door. Let the fool open the door.... " And the moment he would open the door and see the one-eyed boy, he would say, "My God! Again? But why do you come here in the morning?"

One day he became so angry that he wanted to beat him. I had to come from my hiding place, and I said, "You cannot beat him. It is a public road, and it is his right to stand here every morning. We used to come once in a while; now we will come every day. It is up to you to open your door or not to open your door."

He said, "But if I don't open my door, how will I go to my shop?"

I said, "That is *your* problem, not our problem. But this boy is going to stand here."

He said, "This is strange. But why this boy...? Can't you take him to somebody else? Just...my neighbor is a competitor in my business, and I am getting defeated continually because of this boy."

I said, "It is up to you. *Baksheesh!*--if you give one rupee to this boy, he will stand at the other gate."

He said, "One rupee?" In those days one rupee was very valuable, but he said, "I will give."

I said, "Remember, if the other man gives two rupees, then this boy will still be standing here. It is a sheer question of business."

He said, "I am going to report to the police. I can.... "

I said, "You can go. Even the police inspector is afraid of this boy. You can get him to write the report, but he will not call him into his office. Everybody is afraid--even the teachers are afraid. And this boy is so precious...so whoever creates any trouble in the city, I take this boy. Nothing has to be done--he simply stands there in front of the door."

Problems are all around you. So even if you somehow get finished with one problem, another problem arises. And you cannot prevent problems arising. Problems will continue to arise till

you come to a deep understanding of witnessing. That is the only golden key, discovered by centuries of inward search in the East: that there is no need to solve any problem. You simply observe it, and the very observation is enough; the problem evaporates. *spirit06*

In my village there is one man, Sunderlal. I have been surprised...*sunder* means beauty, *sunderlal* means beautiful diamond; and he is anything other than a beauty. He is not even homely. I have been surprised again and again that names are given to people which are just the opposite of their qualities....

This Sunderlal was really ugly. To talk to him meant that you had to look this way and that way; to look at him made one feel a little sick--something went berserk in the stomach. His front two teeth were out, and he had such crossed eyes that to look at him for a little while meant a certain headache--and he was Sunderlal! He was the son of a rich man, and he was a little nuts too.

I used to call him Doctor Sunderlal although he was never able to pass matriculation. He failed so many times that the school authorities asked his father to remove him because he brought their average low every year--and he was not going to pass.

How they managed to get him up to matriculation, that is a miracle. But it is understandable, because up to matriculation all examinations are local, so you can bribe the teachers. This was difficult to do in the matriculation examination because it is not local, it is state-wide. So it is very difficult to find out who is setting the papers, who is examining the papers. It is almost impossible; unless you happen to be the education minister or some relative of the education minister, it is very difficult to find out.

But I started calling him Doctor Sunderlal. He said, "Doctor? But I am not a doctor."

I said, "Not an ordinary doctor like these physicians: you are an honorary doctor."

But he said, "Nobody has given me an honorary doctorate either."

I said, "I am giving you an honorary doctorate. It does not matter who gives it--you get the doctorate, that's the point."

He said, "That is true, " and by and by I convinced him that he *was* an honorary doctor. He started introducing himself to people as Doctor Sunderlal. When I heard this, that he introduces himself as Doctor Sunderlal.... He was a relative of our sannyasin, Narendra.

One day I saw a letterhead with "Doctor Sunderlal, D.Litt., Honorary," printed on it in golden letters, embossed. I said, "This is great!" And as time passed by people completely forgot: he is now known as Doctor Sunderlal, D.Litt. Nobody suspects, nobody even enquires who gave him a doctorate, from what university? But the whole town knows him. And because he is an honorary doctorate he inaugurates social gatherings in the school, in the college--now the town has a college--and he is the most literary figure.

Just now* my mother was saying that Doctor Sunderlal has become a member of parliament. The new government...after Indira's assassination, Rajiv Gandhi chose him. He is rich and certainly respected in the town because he is the only doctor--an honorary doctor! People get...and perhaps he believes it. Now you cannot tell him that he is not. He will drag you to the court.

Now, for almost thirty years he has been a doctor; that is enough. Nobody has objected, nobody has raised a question. In his election campaign his name was Doctor Sunderlal, D.Litt.--"Vote for Doctor Sunderlal, D.Litt." Perhaps--and he *is* a little nuts--he believes that he is. I know that even I cannot persuade him that "this doctorate I gave to you." He will laugh and say, "What are you saying? I have been a doctor for thirty years. You were just a little kid when I became a doctor!"

He will not agree so easily to drop his doctorate. But even if you get a doctorate from a university, what does it mean? There is not much difference. *dark06*

*Note: 1985

One of the richest men of his time, in 1940...I was a small child and my father was sick, so I was with my father in the hospital. This rich man, Sir Seth Hukumchand, had created a really great hospital in Indore. He used to come, and by chance we became friends. He was an old man but he used to come every day and I used to wait for him at the gate. I asked him, "You have so much..." Almost three-fourths of the houses of Indore were his property. And Indore is the next most beautiful and rich place to Bombay.

He said, "You are asking a strange question. Nobody ever asked me."

I had asked him, "Why are you still creating new industries, creating new palaces? And you are becoming old. How is all this going to be of any help at the time of death?"

He said, "I know, everything will remain here and I will be gone. But just a desire to be the most successful, rich man in the country keeps driving me. For no other reason, just that everything I have must be the best."

He has the only Rolls Royce in the whole world made of solid gold. It was never driven, it was just for show, standing in front of his beautiful palace. He has the best horses in the world that you can imagine. I have never seen such beautiful horses. He had a whole palace filled with all kinds of exotic things. And the reason was that he wanted to be the only owner of a certain thing. It was his absolute condition: whenever he purchases a thing, that thing should not be produced again; he should be the only owner. And he was ready to pay any money for it.

His only desire was--because Indore in those days was a state--to purchase all the houses in the state, even the palace of the king. And he almost succeeded--seventy-five percent of the houses of Indore belonged to him. Even the king had to borrow money from him, and he was

giving to him very generously in order to finally settle that the whole of Indore..."He may be the king but it is *my* property."

I asked him, "What will it do to you? What peace will it bring? You are always anxious, tense, coming to the hospital, asking the psychiatrist about your troubles. These houses cannot solve your troubles and this money cannot solve your troubles."

And finally a time came when he captured all the gold of India, he became the gold king of India. He purchased all the gold, wherever it was possible. And once you have all the gold in your hands, you have the whole country in your hands. If you start selling it, the prices will go down. He kept the whole market dependent on him just because he was holding the gold.

And I asked him, "What enjoyment are you getting out of it?"

He said, "I don't know, just there is a tremendous desire to be the richest, to be the most powerful."

The inward journey begins only when you understand it clearly that anything outside is not going to give you contentment. *exist03*

I used to have a friend who was condemned in the whole city--he was a thief, and you can say he was a master thief. For almost six months he would be in jail, and six months outside. Nobody in the city even wanted to talk to him.

From the jail he used to come directly to my house. He was a very lovable man. And whenever he would come from the jail to my house, naturally everybody in the family was disturbed. My father again and again insisted to me that this friendship was not good. I said, "Why do you believe in him and not in me? Am I your son, or is he your son?"

And he said, "What kind of argument are you giving me?"

I said, "I am saying exactly the right thing. You don't believe in me, you believe in him. You are afraid I will be affected by him--you are not giving even a single thought that I may affect him. Why do you think I am so weak?"

He said, "I have never thought from this angle--perhaps you are right."

Slowly, slowly that man became accepted by my family. It took a little time; there were many reasons for them to reject him. The first reason was that he was a Mohammedan; second, he was a thief.

I had to sit outside the dining room because they would not allow him in the dining room. In a Jaina family, no Mohammedan can be allowed in the dining room. Even for guests or customers, separate plates, glasses, saucers, cups--everything is kept, but it is kept separate; it is used only for them. And I insisted that when I invited him for food, I was going to eat with him--I could not insult him. He may be a thief, he may be a Mohammedan, it

doesn't matter; I respect his humanity. So the only way was that I would also have to sit outside the dining room. And my friend used to say, "Why do you unnecessarily continue to fight with your family?"

And slowly, slowly my respect towards him changed him. He was angry with me, saying, "Your respect prevents me from being a thief, and I don't know anything else. I am uneducated."

He was an orphan, and there was no other way for him except either to beg or to steal, and certainly stealing is better than begging. Begging degrades you very badly; by stealing, at least you are using your intelligence, your courage.

He was angry and said, "Now my life has become really a problem, and you are the cause. I cannot steal because I cannot betray your trust, your love and your respect. And nobody is ready to give me employment."

So I took him to my father and I said to him, "Now my friend wants employment. You are against his stealing, now give him employment; otherwise you will be responsible for his stealing. The poor fellow is ready to do any work, but nobody in the whole city is ready to give him work because he is a thief. People say to him, `Bring certificates from where you have been working. Who has ever employed you ever in your whole life?' And he has no certificates."

I told my father, "Listen, somebody has to give him work the first time; otherwise, how can he get a certificate? You give him employment, and then you can give him a certificate. And I guarantee that he will not steal and he will not do anything wrong."

On my guarantee my father employed him. All other friends of my father said, "What are you doing, giving a job to a thief? He will deceive you." But my father said, "My son has given his guarantee, and I have to give the man an opportunity because my son's reasoning is right: If nobody gives him an opportunity, then everybody is pushing him towards the jail. And the whole society is responsible for pushing him towards the jail. He wants to work, but if nobody is willing to give him work.... What do you want--that he should commit suicide or what?"

Once a person goes into jail, then it becomes his only place, his home. Then within a few days he is back, because there is nobody outside to give him any protection, any dignity, any respect, any love. It is better to be in the jail.

He proved tremendously trustworthy, and finally my father had to accept. He said, "You are right. I was thinking that I was taking an unnecessary risk. I had not thought that your reasoning was going to work. He is a professional thief--his whole life has been just going in and out of the jail. But you were right."

My father was a very sincere man and very truthful; he was always willing to accept his mistakes, even in front of his own son. He said, "You were right, that I trusted more in him--I thought he would spoil your life. I did not trust that you might transform his life." *invita25*

Osho meets Mahatma Gandhi

Hundreds of times we had discussed Mahatma Gandhi and his philosophy, and I was always against. People were a little bit puzzled why I was so insistent against a man I had only seen twice, when I was just a child. I will tell you the story of that second meeting....

I can see the train. Gandhi was traveling, and of course he traveled third class. But his "third class" was far better than any first class possible. In a sixty-man compartment there was just him and his secretary and his wife; I think these three were the only people. The whole compartment was reserved. And it was not even an ordinary first-class compartment, because I have never seen such a compartment again. It must have been a first-class compartment, and not only first class, but a special first class. Just the name plate had been changed and it became "third class" so Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy was saved.

I was just ten. My mother--again I mean my grandmother--had given me three rupees. She said, "The station is too far and you may not be back in time for lunch, and one never knows with these trains: it may come ten hours, twelve hours late, so please keep these three rupees." In India in those days, three rupees was almost a treasure. One could live comfortably for three months on them.

She had made a really beautiful robe for me. She knew I did not like long pants; at the most I wore pajama pants and a *kurta.* A kurta is a long robe which I have always loved, and slowly slowly the pajama has disappeared, only the robe remains. Otherwise one has not only divided the upper body and the lower body, but even made different clothes for each. Of course the higher body should have something better, and the lower body is just to be covered, that's all.

She had made a beautiful kurta for me. It was summer and in those parts of central India summer is really difficult because the hot air going into the nostrils feels as if it's on fire. In fact, only in the middle of the night can people find a little rest. It is so hot in central India that you are continuously asking for some cold water, and if some ice is available then it is just paradise. Ice is the costliest thing in those parts, naturally, because by the time it comes from the factory, a hundred miles away, it is almost gone. It has to be rushed as quickly as possible.

My Nani said I should go to see Mahatma Gandhi if I wanted to and she prepared a very thin muslin robe. Muslin is the most artistic and the most ancient fabric too, as far as clothes are concerned. She found the best muslin. It was so thin that it was almost transparent. At that time gold rupees had disappeared and silver rupees had taken their place. Those silver rupees were too heavy for the poor muslin pocket. Why am I saying it?--because something I'm going to say would not be possible to understand without it.

The train came as usual, thirteen hours late. Almost everybody was gone except me. You know me, I'm stubborn. Even the stationmaster said, "Boy, you are something. Everybody has gone but you seem ready to stay the whole night. There is no sign of the train and you have been waiting since early this morning."

To come to the station at four o'clock that morning I had to leave my house in the middle of the night. But I had not yet used those three rupees because everybody had brought so many things with them, and they were all so generous to a little boy who had come so far. They were offering me fruits, sweets, cakes and everything, so there was no question of feeling hungry. When the train finally arrived, I was the only person there--and what a person! Just a ten-year-old boy, standing by the side of the stationmaster.

He introduced me to Mahatma Gandhi and said, "Don't think of him as just a boy. The whole day I have watched him, and I have discussed many things with him, because there was no other work. And he is the only one who has remained. Many had come but they left long ago. I respect him because I know he would have stayed here till the last day of existence; he would not leave until the train arrived. And if the train had not arrived, I don't think he would ever have left. He would have lived here."

Mahatma Gandhi was an old man; he called me close and looked at me. But rather than looking at me, he looked at my pocket--and that put me off him forever. And he said, "What is that?"

I said, "Three rupees."

He said, "Donate them." He used to have a box with a hole in it by his side. When you donated, you put the rupees in the hole and they disappeared. Of course he had the key, so they would appear again, but for you they had disappeared.

I said, "If you have the courage you can take them. The pocket is there, the rupees are there, but may I ask you for what purpose you are collecting these rupees?"

He said, "For poor people."

I said, "Then it is perfectly okay." And I myself dropped those three rupees into his box. But he was the one to be surprised, for when I started leaving I took the whole box with me.

He said, "For God's sake, what are you doing? That is for the poor!"

I said, "I have heard you already, you need not bother repeating it again. I am taking this box for the poor. There are many in my village. Please give me the key; otherwise I will have to find a thief so that he can open the lock. He is the only expert in that art."

He said, "This is strange...." He looked at his secretary. The secretary was dumb, as secretaries always are; otherwise why should they be secretaries? He looked at Kasturba, his

wife, who said, "You have met your equal. You cheat everybody, now he is taking your whole box. Good! It is good, because I am tired of seeing that box always there, just like a wife!"

I felt sorry for that man and left the box, saying, "No, you are the poorest man, it seems. Your secretary does not have any intelligence, nor does your wife seem to have any love for you. I cannot take this box away--you keep it. But remember, I had come to see a mahatma, but I saw only a businessman."

That was his caste. In India, *baniya,* businessman, is exactly what you mean by a Jew. India has its own Jews; they are not Jews, they are baniyas. To me, at that age, Mahatma Gandhi appeared to be only a businessman. I have spoken against him thousands of times because I don't agree with anything in his philosophy of life. *glimps45*

There was an earthquake in Bihar, in India, and Mahatma Gandhi said that the earthquake happened because God was punishing the sinners. I was very young, but I wrote him a letter that it is very strange that God should punish the sinners only in Bihar. What about the whole rest of the world? Do you consider that only Bihar consists only of sinners, and the whole world consists of saints?

And he had neither guts nor a gentleman's attitude. He never gave any answer. I wrote a letter to Ramdas, his son--because he was my friend--I wrote to Ramdas asking him whether his father had received my letter or not. He said he *had* received it, "but he has no answer to give so he is keeping quiet." *last202*

In India they say, "Even a leaf of a tree moves only if God wants to move it." So even the murderer is not really responsible, he is simply doing what God wants to do. That's the whole teaching in the *Gita* of Krishna, and the Gita is worshipped by Hindus and even by non-Hindus. And one cannot believe...even people like Mahatma Gandhi, who pretend to be non-violent, call the Gita their mother. Gandhi used to say that Hindus and Mohammedans are one.

I was not more than seventeen when I wrote him a letter and asked him, "If Hindus and Mohammedans are one, if the Gita is your mother, what about the holy *Koran?* Is the holy Koran your father?" He was so angry--his son was my friend and he told me that he simply threw the letter out the window. Ramdas, his son, told him, "What he is asking is relevant. If you can call the Gita your mother.... If you cannot call the Koran your father, you can call it step-father, uncle, but some relationship has to be there, otherwise how are Hindus and Mohammedans one?" I never received any letter. Ramdas informed me, "You will never receive any answer."

I wrote Gandhi another letter: "On the one hand you say you are non-violent, and on the other hand you worship the Gita, which teaches simply violence and nothing else." The whole book is a teaching for violence. Krishna, to his disciple Arjuna, is teaching, "You go to the war, fight, because that's what is the will of God, because without his will nothing happens. So if this big war is happening, it cannot happen without his will." Krishna tries in every way to persuade Arjuna. Arjuna argues but he is not a great logician, otherwise it was so simple.

If I was in his place, I would have simply got out of the chariot and walked towards the forest, and told him, "This is what God wills. What can I do? I am simply following his will. Nobody can do anything against his will, so if I am going to the forest to meditate and not to fight, it is his responsibility." There was no need for any argument. And the whole Gita is just an argument: Arjuna trying to argue or non-violence and Krishna imposing violence because God wants it. His sole argument is, "You should surrender to God's will and do whatever He wants." Arjuna must have been stupid. I would have accepted in the very beginning--there would have been no need for the Gita--that "You are right, I surrender and now I will do only that which God wants." And I would have walked into the forest. *last321*

Influence of the mystic, Magga Baba

I have been in contact with many esoteric groups. I have known many persons who are still alive who belong to some group. I have known many keys which were delivered by authentic teachers. But no key of the old tradition is enough...

I have known so many esoteric groups--in this life and before. I have been in contact with many esoteric groups, but I cannot tell you their whereabouts. I cannot tell you their names, because that is not permitted. And it is of no use really. But I can tell you that they still exist, they still try to help. *gate08*

On this pilgrimage I have met many more remarkable men than Gurdjieff recounts in his book *Meetings with Remarkable Men.* By and by, as and when it happens, I will talk about them. Today I can talk about one of those remarkable men.

His real name is not known, nor his real age, but he was called "Magga Baba." *Magga* simply means "big cup." He always used to keep his magga, his cup, in his hand. He used it for everything--for his tea, his milk, his food, for the money people gave him, or whatsoever the moment demanded. All he possessed was his magga and that is why he was known as Magga Baba. *Baba* is a respectful word. It simply means grandfather, your father's father. In Hindi your mother's father is nana, your father's father is baba.

Magga Baba was certainly one of the most remarkable men that may ever have lived on this planet. He was really one of the chosen ones. You can count him with Jesus, Buddha, Lao Tzu. I know nothing about his childhood or his parents. Nobody knows from where he came--one day suddenly he appeared in the town.

He did not speak. People persisted in asking questions of all kinds. He either remained silent, or if they nagged too much he started shouting gibberish, rubbish, just meaningless sounds. Those poor people thought he was speaking in a language that perhaps they didn't understand. He was not using language at all. He was just making sounds. For example,

"Higgalal hoo hoo hoo guloo higga hee hee." Then he would wait and again ask, *"Hee hee hee?"* It seemed as if he was asking, "Have you understood?"

And the poor people would say, "Yes, Baba, yes."

Then he would show his magga and make the sign. This sign in India means money. It comes from the old days when there were real gold and silver coins. People used to check whether it was real gold or not by throwing the coin to the ground and listening to its sound. Real gold has its own sound, and nobody can fake it. So Magga Baba would show his magga with one hand and with the other give the sign for money, meaning, "If you have understood then give something to me." And people would give.

I would laugh myself to tears because he had not said anything. But he was not greedy for money. He would take from one person and give it to another. His magga was always empty. Once in a while there would be something in it, but rarely. It was a passage: money would come into it and go; food would come into it and go; and it always remained empty. He was always cleaning it. I have seen him morning, evening and afternoon, always cleaning it.

I want to confess to you--'you' means the world--that I was the only person to whom he used to speak, but only in privacy, when nobody else was present. I would go to him deep in the night, perhaps two o'clock in the morning, because that was the most likely time to find him alone. He would be hugged up in his old blanket, on a winter's night, by the side of a fire. I would sit at his side for a while. I never disturbed him; that was the one reason why he loved me. Once in a while it would happen that he would turn on his side, open his eyes and see me sitting there and start talking of his own accord.

He was not a Hindi-speaking person, so people thought it was difficult to communicate with him, but that is not true. He was certainly not a Hindi-oriented person, but he knew not only Hindi but many other languages too. Of course he knew the language of silence the most; he remained silent almost all his life. In the day he would not speak to anybody, but in the night he would speak to me, only when I was alone. It was such a blessing to hear his few words.

Magga Baba never said anything about his own life, but he said many things about life. He was the first man who told me, "Life is more than what it appears to be. Don't judge by its appearances but go deep down into the valleys where the roots of life are." He would suddenly speak, and suddenly he would be silent. That was his way. There was no way to persuade him to speak: either he spoke or not. He would not answer any questions, and the conversations between us two were an absolute secret. Nobody knew about it. This is for the first time that I am saying it.

I have heard many great speakers, and he was just a poor man, but his words were pure honey, so sweet and nourishing, and so pregnant with meaning. "But," he told me, "you are not to tell anybody that I have been speaking to you until I die, because many people think I am deaf. It is good for me that they think so. Many think that I am mad--that is even better as far as I am concerned. Many who are very intellectual try to figure out what I say, and it is just gibberish. I wonder, when I hear the meaning that they have derived from it. I say to myself,

'My God! If these people are the intellectuals, the professors, the pundits, the scholars, then what about the poor crowd? I had not said anything, yet they have made up so many things out of nothing, just like soap bubbles.'"

For some reason, or maybe for no reason at all, he loved me.

I have had the fortune to be loved by many strange people. Magga Baba is the first on my list.

The whole day he was surrounded by people. He was really a free man, yet not even free to move a single inch because people were holding on to him. They would put him into a rickshaw and take him away wherever they wanted. Of course he would not say no, because he was pretending to be either deaf or dumb or mad. And he never uttered any word that could be found in any dictionary. Obviously he could not say yes or no; he would simply go.

Once or twice he was stolen. He disappeared for months because people from another town had stolen him. When the police found him and asked him whether he wanted to return, of course he did his thing again. He said some nonsense, *"Yuddle fuddle shuddle...."*

The police said, "This man is mad. What are we going to write in our reports: *'Yuddle fuddle shuddle'*? What does it mean? Can anyone make any sense out of it?" So he remained there until he was stolen back again by a crowd from the original town. That was my town where I was living soon after the death of my grandfather.

I visited him almost every night without fail, under his neem tree, where he used to sleep and live. Even when I was sick and my grandmother would not allow me to go out, even then, during the night when she was asleep, I would escape. But I had to go; Magga Baba had to be visited at least once each day. He was a kind of spiritual nourishment.

He helped me tremendously although he never gave any directions except by his very being. Just by his very presence he triggered unknown forces in me, unknown to me. I am most grateful to this man Magga Baba, and the greatest blessing of all was that I, a small child, was the only one to whom he used to speak. Those moments of privacy, knowing that he spoke to no one else in the whole world, were tremendously strengthening, vitalizing.

If sometimes I would go to him and somebody else was present, he would do something so terrible that the other person would escape. For example he would throw things, or jump, or dance like a madman, in the middle of the night. Anybody was bound to become afraid--after all, you have a wife, children, and a job, and this man seems to be just mad; he could do anything. Then, when the person had gone, we would both laugh together.

I have never laughed like that with anybody else, and I don't think it is going to happen again in this lifetime...and I don't have any other life. The wheel has stopped. Yes, it is running a little bit, but that is only past momentum; no new energy is being fed into it.

Magga Baba was so beautiful that I have not seen any other man who can be put by his side. He was just like a Roman sculpture, just perfect--even more perfect than any sculpture can be, because he was alive, so full of life I mean. I don't know whether it is possible to meet a man like Magga Baba again, and I don't want to either because one Magga Baba is enough, more than enough. He was so satisfying--and who cares for repetition? And I know perfectly, one cannot be higher than that. *glimps15*

To me Magga Baba was important, but if I had to choose between my Nani and him I would still choose my Nani. Although she was not enlightened then and Magga Baba was, sometimes an unenlightened person is so beautiful that one would choose them, even though the enlightened one is available as an alternative.

Of course if I could choose both I would. Or, if I had a choice of two among the whole world of millions of people, then I would have them both. Magga Baba on the outside...he wouldn't enter my grandmother's house; he would remain outside under his neem tree. And of course my Nani could not sit at the side of Magga Baba. "That fellow!" she used to call him. "That fellow! Forget about him and never go close to him. Even when you just pass by him, always take a shower." She was always afraid he had lice, because nobody had ever seen him take a bath.

Perhaps she was right: he had never taken a bath as long as I had known him. They could not exist together, that too is true. Coexistence could not be possible in this case--but we could always make arrangements. Magga Baba could always be under the neem tree outside in the courtyard, and Nani could be the queen in the house. And I could have the love of them both, without having to choose this or that. I hate "either/or." *glimps15*

Influence of mystics, Pagal Baba and Masto

Pagal Baba was one of those remarkable men whom I am going to talk about. He was of the same category as Magga Baba. He was known just as Pagal Baba; *pagal* means "the mad." He came like a wind, always suddenly, and then disappeared as suddenly as he had come.

I did not discover him, he discovered me. By that I mean I was just swimming in the river when he passed by: he looked at me, I looked at him, and he jumped in the river and we swam together. I don't know how long we swam but I was not the one to say "enough." He was already an established saint. I had seen him before, but not so closely. At a gathering, doing *bhajan* and singing songs of God, I had seen him and had a certain feeling towards him, but I had kept it to myself. I had not even uttered a single word about it. There are things which are better kept in the heart; there they grow faster. That's the right soil.

At this time he was an old man; I was not more than twelve. Obviously he was the one to say, "Let us stop. I am feeling tired."

I said, "You could have told me any time and I would have stopped, but as far as I am concerned I am a fish in the river."

Yes, that's how I was known in my town. Who else swims six hours every morning from four till ten? *glimps27*

This man Pagal Baba will be referred to many times, for the simple reason that he introduced so many people to me. Whenever I mention them, Pagal Baba will have to be mentioned too. Through him a world opened up. He was far more valuable to me than any university, because he introduced me to all that is best in every possible field.

He used to come to my village just like a whirlwind and he would take hold of me. My parents could not say no to him; not even my Nani could say no to him. In fact, the moment I mentioned Pagal Baba they all said, "Then it's okay," because they knew that if they denied me, Pagal Baba would come and create a nuisance in the house. He could break things, he could beat people, and he was so respected that nobody would prevent him from doing any damage. So it was best for everybody to say, "Yes...if Pagal Baba wants to take you with him, you can go. And we know," they said, "that with Pagal Baba you will be safe."

My other relatives in the town used to tell my father, "You are not doing the right thing in sending your boy along with that insane man."

My father replied, "My boy is such that I am more worried about that old insane man than about him. You need not bother."

I traveled many places with Pagal Baba. He took me not only to great artists and musicians, but also to the great places. It was with him that I first saw the Taj Mahal, and the caves of Ellora and Ajantas. He was the man with whom I first saw the Himalayas. I owe him too much, and I have never even thanked him. I could not because he used to touch my feet. If I would ever say anything to him in thanks, he would immediately put his hand to his lips and say, "Just be quiet. Never mention your thankfulness. I am thankful to you, not you to me."

One night when we were alone I asked him, "Why are you thankful to me? I have not done anything for you and you have done many things for me, yet you don't even allow me to say thank you."

He said, "One day you will understand, but right now go to sleep and don't mention it again at all, never, never. When the time comes you will know." By the time I came to know it was too late, he was no more. I came to know, but too late.

If he had been alive perhaps it would have been too difficult for him to realize that I had come to know that once, in a past life, he had poisoned me. Although I had survived, he was now just trying to compensate; he was trying to efface it. He was doing everything in his power to be good to me--and he was always good to me, more than I ever deserved--but now I know why: he was trying to bring balance.

In the East they call it *karma,* the "theory of action." Whatever you do, remember, you will have to bring a balance again to things disturbed by your action. Now I know why he was so good to a child. He was trying, and he succeeded, to bring about balance. Once your actions are totally balanced you can then disappear. Only then can you stop the wheel. In fact, the wheel stops by itself, you don't even have to stop it. *glimps29*

My father was always amazed whenever Pagal Baba would come and touch my feet. He himself would touch Pagal Baba's feet. It was really hilarious. And just to make the circle whole I would touch my father's feet. Pagal Baba would start laughing so loudly that everybody became silent as if something really great was happening--and my father would look embarrassed.

Pagal tried again and again to convince me that my future was to be a musician. I said "No," and when I say no, I mean no.

From my very childhood my no has been very clear, and I rarely use yes. That word yes is so precious, almost holy, that it should be used only in the presence of the divine, whether it is love or beauty, or right now...orange blossom on the gulmohar, so thick it is as if the whole tree is aflame. When anything reminds you of the sacred, then you can use the word yes--it is full of prayer. No simply means that I cut myself off from the proposed activity. And I have been a no-sayer; it was very difficult to get a yes out of me.

Seeing Pagal Baba, a man who was known to be enlightened, I recognized that he was unique even in those days. I did not know anything of what enlightenment is. I was in just the same position as I am now, again utterly unknowing. But his presence was luminous. You could recognize him among thousands.

He was the first man who took me to a *Kumbha Mela.* It takes place every twelve years in Prayag, and is the biggest gathering in the whole world. For Hindus Kumbha Mela is one of their life's cherished dreams. A Hindu thinks that if you have not been to a Kumbha Mela at least once, you have missed your life. That's what a Hindu thinks. The minimum count is one million people, the maximum is three million people.

It's the same with the Mohammedans. Unless you are a *haji,* unless you have been to Haj, to Mecca, you have missed. *Haj* means "journey to Mecca," where Mohammed lived and died. All over the world it is every Mohammedan's most precious dream; he has to go at least once to Mecca. The Hindu has to go to Prayag. These places are their Israels. The religions may look very different on the surface, but if you just scratch a little bit you will find the same rubbish; Hindu, Jew, Mohammedan, Christian, it does not matter.

But Kumbha Mela has a unique character. Just a gathering of three million people is in itself a rare experience. All the Hindu monks come there, and they are not a small minority. They number five hundred thousand, and they are very colorful people. You cannot imagine so many unique sects. You cannot believe that such people even exist, and they all gather there.

Pagal Baba took me to the first Kumbha Mela of my life. I was to attend once more, but this experience with Pagal Baba at the Kumbha Mela was immensely educating, because he took me to all the great, and the so-called great saints, and in front of them, and with thousands of people around, he would ask me, "Is this man a real saint?"

I would say, "No."

But Pagal Baba was also as stubborn as I am, he did not lose heart. He went on and on, taking me to every kind of saint possible, until I said to one man, "Yes."

Pagal Baba laughed and said, "I knew that you would recognize the true one. And this man"--he pointed to the man about whom I had said yes--"he is a realized one, not known to anybody."

The man was just sitting under a pipal tree, without any followers. Perhaps he was the loneliest man in that great crowd of three million people. Baba first touched my feet, then his feet.

The man said, "But where did you find this child? I never thought a child would be able to recognize me. I have hidden myself so perfectly. You can recognize me, that's okay, but how could he do it?"

Baba said, "That's the puzzle. That's why I touch his feet. You touch his feet right now." And who could have disobeyed that ninety-year-old man? He was so majestic. The man immediately touched my feet.

That's how Pagal Baba used to introduce me to all kinds of people. In this circle I am mostly talking of the musicians, because they were his love affair. He wanted me to become a musician, but I could not fulfill his desire because for me music, at the most, can only be an entertainment. I told him exactly in those same words, saying, "Pagal Baba, music is a much lower kind of meditation. I am not interested in it."

He said, "I know it is. I wanted to hear it from you. But music is a good step to go higher; no need to cling to it, or to remain on it. A step is a step to something else."

That's how I have used music in all my meditations, as a step to something--which is really "the music"--soundless. Nanak says, *"Ek omkar sat nam:* there is only one name of God, or of truth, and that is the soundless sound of aum." Perhaps meditation came out of music, or perhaps music is the mother of meditation. But music itself is not meditation. It can only indicate, or be a hint....

I was not going to become a musician. Pagal Baba knew it, but he was in love with music, and he wanted me to at least be acquainted with the best of the musicians; perhaps I may become attracted. He introduced me to so many musicians, it was even difficult to remember all their names. But a few names are very famous and known all over the world. *glimps29*

Pagal Baba has to be talked about only in an indirect way; that was the quality of the man. He was always in brackets, very invisible. He introduced me to many musicians, and I always asked him why. He said, "One day you will be a musician."

I said, "Pagal Baba, sometimes it seems people are right: you are mad. I am not going to be a musician.

He laughed and said, "I know that. Still I say you will be a musician."

Now, what to make of it? I have not become a musician, but in a way he was right. I have not played on musical instruments, but I have played on thousands of hearts. I have created a far deeper music than any instrument can--noninstrumental, nontechnical. *glimps29*

Three flutists, all of them introduced to me by Pagal Baba: one man, Hariprasad Chaurasia, from north India where they play a different kind of flute music; another from Bengal, Pannalal Ghosh--he again plays a different kind of flute, very male, very loud and overpowering. Sachdeva's flute is almost silent, feminine, just the opposite of Pannalal Ghosh. *glimps28*

Hariprasad is my choice as far as these flutists are concerned. His flute has the beauty of both the others and yet is neither like that of Pannalal Ghosh--too loud and bombastic--nor so sharp that it cuts and hurts you. It is soft like a breeze, a cool breeze on a summer's night. It is like the moon; the light is there but not hot, cool. You can feel the coolness of it.

Hariprasad must be considered the greatest flutist ever born, but he is not very famous. He cannot be, he is very humble. To be famous you have to be aggressive. To be famous you have to fight in the ambitious world. He has not fought, and he is the last man to fight to be recognized.

But Hariprasad was recognized by men like Pagal Baba. Pagal Baba also recognized a few others whom I will describe later on, because they too came into my life through him.

It is a strange thing: Hariprasad was not at all known to me till Pagal Baba introduced him to me, and then he became so interested that he used to come to Pagal Baba just to visit me. One day Pagal Baba jokingly said to him, "Now you don't come for me. You know it, I know it, and the person for whom you come knows it."

I laughed, Hariprasad laughed and said, "Baba you are right."

I said, "I knew Baba was going to mention it sooner or later." And this was the beauty of the man. He brought many people to me, but prevented me from even thanking him. He said only one thing to me: "I have only done my duty. I ask just one favor: when I die, will you give the fire at my funeral?"

In India, it is thought to be of great importance. If a man is without a son he suffers his whole life, because who will give the fire at his funeral? It is called "giving the fire."

When he asked me, I said, "Baba, I have my own father, and he will be angry--and I don't know about your family; perhaps you have a son...."

He said, "Don't be bothered about anything, either about your father or about my family. This is my decision."

I had never seen him in that kind of mood. I knew then that his end was very close. He was not able to waste time even discussing it.

I said, "Okay, no argument. I will give you the fire. It does not matter whether my father objects or your family objects. I don't know your family."

By chance Pagal Baba died in my own village. But perhaps he arranged it--I think he arranged it. And when I started his funeral by giving fire to it, my father said, "What are you doing? This can be done only by the eldest son."

I said, "Dada, let me do it. I have promised him. And as far as you are concerned, I will not be able to do it; my younger brother will do it. In fact, he is your eldest son, not me. I am of no use to the family, and will never be. In fact, I will always prove to be a nuisance to the family. My younger brother, second to me, will give you the fire, and he will take care of the family."...

...I told my father, "Pagal Baba asked me and I have promised him, so I have to give the fire. As far as your death is concerned, don't be worried, my younger brother will be there. I will also be present, but not as your son."

I don't know why I said this, and what he might have thought, but it proved true. I was present when he died. In fact I had called him to live with me, just so that I did not have to go up to the town where he lived. I never wanted to go there again after my grandmother's death. That was another promise. I have to fulfill so many promises, but up to now I have successfully fulfilled a major part of them. There are only a few promises which remain to be fulfilled. *glimps30*

I had promised Pagal Baba to get a master's degree....

Somehow Pagal Baba got the idea that unless you had a master's degree, a postgraduate degree, you would not be able to get a good job.

I said, "Baba, do you think I will ever desire a job?"

He laughed and said, "I know you will not desire it, but just in case. I am just an old man, and I think of all the worst things possible." You have heard the proverb, "Hope for the best, but expect the worst." He added something more to it. Baba said, "Prepare for the worst too. It should not be met unprepared; otherwise, how are you going to face it?" *glimps34*

Pagal Baba in his last days was always a little bit worried. I could see it, although he had not said anything, nor had anybody else mentioned it. Perhaps nobody else was even aware that

he was worried. It was certainly not about his illness, old age, or his oncoming death; those were absolutely immaterial to the man.

One night, when I was alone with him, I asked him. In fact, I had to wake him up in the middle of the night, because it was so difficult to find a moment when there was nobody else with him.

He said to me, "It must be something of great importance; otherwise you would not have awakened me. What's the matter?"

I said, "That's the question. I have been watching you--I feel a little shadow of worry around you. It has never been there before. Your aura has always been so clear, just like a bright sun, but now I see a little shadow. It cannot be death."

He laughed and said, "Yes, the shadow is there, and it is not death, that too is true. My concern is, I am waiting for a man so that I can hand over my responsibility for you to him. I am worried because he has not come yet. If I die it will be impossible for you to be able to find him."

I said, "If I really need somebody, I will find him. But I don't need anybody. You relax before death comes. I don't want to be the cause of this shadow. You should die as brilliantly radiant as you have lived."

He said, "It is not possible.... But I know the man will come--I am worrying unnecessarily. He is a man of his word; he has promised to reach me before I die."

I asked him, "How does he know when you are going to die?"

He laughed and said, "That is why I want you to be introduced to him. You are very young and I would like someone like me just to be around you." He said, "In fact, this is an old convention, that if a child is ever going to become awakened, then at least three awakened people should recognize him at an early age."

I said, "Baba, this is all nonsense. Nobody can prevent me from awakening."

He said, "I know, but I am an old, conventional man, so please, particularly at the time of my death, don't say anything against convention."

I said, "Okay, for your sake I will keep absolutely silent. I will not say anything, because whatsoever I say is somehow going to be against convention, tradition."

He said, "I am not saying that you should be silent, but just feel what I am feeling. I am an old man. I have nobody in the world for whom I care, except you. I don't know why, or how, you became so close to me. I want somebody in my place so you don't miss me."

I said, "Baba, nobody can replace you, but I promise you that I will try hard not to miss you."

But the man arrived the next morning.

The first awakened man who recognized me was Magga Baba. The second was Pagal Baba, and the third was more strange than even I could have imagined. Even Pagal Baba was not so mad. The man was called Masta Baba.

Baba is a respectful word; it simply means "the grandfather." But anybody who is recognized by the people as someone enlightened is also called Baba, because he is really the oldest man in the community. He may not be actually; he may be just a young man, but he has to be called Baba, the grandfather.

Masta Baba was superb, just superb, and just the way I like a man to be. He was exactly as if made for me. We became friends even before Pagal Baba introduced us.

I was standing outside the house. I don't know why I was standing there; at least now I can't remember the purpose, it was so long ago. Perhaps I was also waiting, because Pagal Baba had said the man would keep his word; he would come. And I was certainly curious like any child. I was a child, and I have remained a child in spite of everything else. Perhaps I was waiting, or pretending to do something else but actually waiting for the man, and looking up the road--and there he was! I had not expected him to arrive this way! He came running!

He was not very old, no more than thirty-five, just at the peak of his youth. He was a tall man, very thin, with beautiful long hair and a beautiful beard.

I asked him, "Are you Masta Baba?"

He was a little taken aback and said, "How did you know my name?"

I said, "There is nothing mysterious in it. Pagal Baba has been waiting for you; naturally he mentioned your name. But you are really the man I myself would have chosen to be with. You are as mad as Pagal Baba must have been when he was young. Perhaps you are just the young Pagal Baba come back again."

He said, "You seem to be madder than me. Where is Pagal Baba anyway?"

I showed him the way, and entered behind him. He touched the feet of Pagal Baba, who then said, "This is my last day, and Masto"--that was the way he used to call him--"I was waiting for you, and getting a little worried."

Masto replied, "Why? Death is nothing to you."

Baba replied, "Of course death is nothing to me, but look behind you. That boy means much to me; perhaps he will be able to do what I wanted to and could not. You touch his feet. I have been waiting so that I could introduce you to him."

Masta Baba looked into my eyes...and he was the only *real* man out of the many whom Pagal Baba had introduced to me and told to touch my feet.

It had become almost a cliche. Everybody knew that if you go to Pagal Baba you will have to touch the feet of that boy who is a nuisance in every possible way. And you have to touch his feet--what absurdity! But Pagal Baba is mad. This man, Masto, was certainly different. With tears in his eyes and folded hands he said, "From this moment onwards you will be my Pagal Baba. He is leaving his body, but he will live on as you."

I don't know how much time passed, because he would not let go of my feet. He was crying. His beautiful hair was spread all over the ground. Again and again I told him, "Masta Baba, it is enough."

He said, "Unless you call me Masto, I will not leave your feet."

Now, 'Masto' is a term used only by an older man to a child. How could I call him Masto? But there was no way out. I had to. Even Pagal Baba said, "Don't wait, call him Masto, so that I can die without any shadow around me."

Naturally, in such a situation I had to call him Masto. The moment I used the name, Masto said, "Say it thrice."

In the East, that too is a convention. Unless you say a thing thrice it does not mean much. So three times I said, "Masto, Masto, Masto. Now will you please leave my feet?" And I laughed, Pagal Baba laughed, Masto laughed--and that laughter from all three joined us together into something which is unbreakable.

That very day Pagal Baba died. But Masto did not stay, although I told him that death was very close.

He said, "For me now, you are the one. Whenever I need to, I will come to you. He is going to die anyway; in fact, to tell you the truth, he should have died three days ago. He has been hanging around just for you, so that he could introduce me to you. And it is not only for you, it is for me too."

I asked Pagal Baba before he died, "Why did you look so happy after Masta Baba had come here?"

He said, "Just a conventional mind, forgive me."

He was such a nice old man. To ask forgiveness, at the age of ninety, from a boy, and with so much love....

I said, "I am not asking why you waited for him. The question is not about you or him. He is a beautiful man, and worth waiting for. I am asking why you worried so much."

He said, "Again let me ask you not to argue at this moment. It is not that I am against argument, as you know. I particularly love the way you argue, and the strange turns you give to your arguments, but this is not the time. There is no time really. I am living on borrowed time. I can tell you only one thing: I am happy that he came, and happy that you both became friendly and loving as I wanted you to. Perhaps one day you will see the truth of this old, traditional idea."

The idea is that unless three enlightened people recognize a child as a future buddha, it is almost impossible for him to become one. Pagal Baba, you were right. Now I can see it is not just a convention. To recognize somebody as enlightened is to help him immeasurably. Particularly if a man like Pagal Baba recognizes you and touches your feet--or a man like Masto.

I continued to call him Masto because Pagal Baba had said, "Never call him Masta Baba again; he will be offended. I used to call him Masto, and from now on you have to do the same." And it was really a sight!--a child calling him, who was respected by hundreds of people, "Masto." And not only that, he would immediately do whatever I said to him.

Once, just as an example.... He was delivering a talk. I stood up and said, "Masto, stop immediately!" He was in the middle of a sentence. He did not even complete it; he stopped. People urged him to please finish what he was saying. He would not even answer. He pointed towards me. I had to go to the microphone and tell the people to please go to their homes, the lecture was over, and Masto had been taken into my custody.

He laughed hilariously, and touched my feet. And his way of touching my feet.... Thousands of people must have touched my feet, but he had a way of his own, just unique. He touched my feet almost--how to say it--as if he were confronting God himself. And he always became just tears, and his long hair.... I had such a job helping him to sit up again.

I would say, "Masto, enough! Enough is enough." But who was there to listen? He was crying, singing, or chanting a mantra. I had to wait until he had finished. Sometimes I was sitting there for even half an hour, just to say to him, "It is enough." But I could only say it when he had finished. After all, I too have some manners. I could not just say, "Stop!" or "Leave my feet!" when they were in his hands.

In fact I never wanted him to leave them, but I had other things to do, and so did he. It is a practical world, and although I am very impractical, as far as others are concerned, I am not; I am always pragmatic and practical. When I could get a single moment in which to interrupt, I would say, "Masto, stop. Enough. You are crying your eyes out, and your hair--I will have to wash it. It is becoming dirty in the mud."

You know the Indian dust: it is omnipresent, everywhere, particularly in a village. Everything is dusty. Even people's faces look dusty. What can they do? How many times can they wash?...

I told Masto, "I will have to wash your hair." And I used to wash his hair. It was so beautiful, and I always love anything beautiful. This man Masto, about whom Pagal Baba worried so much, was the third enlightened man. He wanted three enlightened men to touch the feet of a small unenlightened boy, and he managed.

Madmen have their own ways. He managed perfectly. He even persuaded the enlightened ones to touch the feet of a boy who was certainly not enlightened.

I asked him, "Don't you think this is a little violent?"

He said, "Not at all. The present has to be offered to the future. And if an enlightened person cannot see into the future, he is not enlightened. It is not just a crazy man's idea," he said, "but one of the most ancient and respected ideas."

Buddha, even when he was only twenty-four hours old, was visited by an enlightened man, who cried and touched the feet of the child....

These three people are the most important that I have ever met, and I don't think I am going to meet anybody who will be more important than those three. I have met other enlightened people too, after my enlightenment, but that is another story.

I have met my own disciples after they became enlightened; that too is a different story. But to be recognized when I was just a small child, and everybody else was against me, was a strange fate. My family was always against me. I exclude my father, my mother, my brothers--but it was a big family. They were all against me, for a simple reason--and I can understand them, they were right in a way--that I was behaving like a madman, and they were concerned.

Everybody in that small town was complaining against me to my poor father. I must say that he had infinite patience. He would listen to everybody. It was almost a twenty-four-hour job. Each day--day in, day out, sometimes even in the middle of the night--somebody would come, because I had done something which should not have been done. And I was doing only things which should not be done. In fact, I wondered how I knew which were the things which should not be done, because not even by accident did I do anything which should have been done.

Once I asked Pagal Baba, "Perhaps you can explain it to me. I could understand if fifty percent of the things I did were wrong, and fifty percent were right, but with me it is always one hundred percent wrong. How do I manage it? Can you explain it to me?"

Pagal Baba laughed and said, "You manage perfectly. That is the way to do things. And don't be bothered what others say; you go on in your own way. Listen to all the complaints, and if you are punished, enjoy."

I really did enjoy it, I must say--even the punishment. My father stopped punishing me the moment he found out that I enjoyed it. *glimps31*

Masto took care of me more efficiently than Pagal Baba could ever have done. First, Baba was really the madman. Secondly, he would come only once in a while like a whirlwind to visit me, then disappear. This is not the way to take care. Once I even told him, saying, "Baba, you talk so much about how you are taking care of this child, but before you say it again, I must be heard."

He laughed and said, "I understand, you need not say it, but I will pass you on to the right hands. I am not really capable of taking care of you. Can you understand that I am ninety years old? It is time for me to leave the body. I am hanging around just to find the right person for you. Once I have found him I can relax into death."

I never knew then that he was really serious, but that's what he did. He handed over his charge to Masto, and died laughing. That was the last thing he did.

Zarathustra may have laughed when he was born...nobody is a witness, but he must have laughed; his whole life indicated towards it. It was that laughter which caught the attention of one of the most intelligent men in the West, Friedrich Nietzsche. But Pagal Baba really laughed as he died, before we could ask why. We could not have asked the question anyway. He was not a philosopher, and he would not have answered even if he had lived. But what a way to die! And remember, it was not just a smile. I really mean a laughter.

Everybody there looked at each other thinking, "What's the matter?"--until he laughed so loudly that everybody thought that up till then he had been only mildly mad, but now he had gone to the extreme. They all left. Naturally, nobody laughs when one is born, just as part of etiquette; and nobody laughs at death, again just nothing but a mannerism. Both are British.

Baba was always against manners and the people who believe in manners. That's why he loved me, that's why he loved Masto. And when he was looking for a man who could take care of me, naturally, he could not have found a better man than Masto.

Masto proved himself more than Baba could ever have thought. He did so much for me that even to say it hurts. It is something so private that it should not be said, so private that one should not even say it while one is alone. *glimps33*

Masta Baba...I will call him only Masto, because that's the way he wanted me to call him. I always called him Masto, although reluctantly, and I told him to remember it. Also, Pagal Baba had said to me, "If he wants to be called Masto by you, just as I call him, then don't create misery for him in any way. From the moment I die you will take my place for him."

And that day Pagal Baba died, and I had to call him Masto. I was not more than twelve years old, and Masto was at least thirty-five, or maybe more. It is difficult for a twelve-year-old boy to judge exactly, and thirty-five is a most deceptive age; the person could be thirty or forty, it all depends on his genetics. *glimps32*

Alas, I cannot show you Masto. His whole body was beautiful. One could not believe that he had not come from the world of the gods. In India there are many beautiful stories. One of them from the *Rigveda,* is that of Pururva and Uruvashi.

Uruvashi is a goddess who becomes fed up with all the pleasures of paradise. I love the story because it is so true. If you have all the pleasures, how long can you endure them? One is bound to become bored. The story must have been written by someone who knew....

It is one of the beautiful stories that I have always loved.

Masto must have been a god born in this world. That's the only way to say how beautiful he was. And it was not only the beauty of the body, which certainly was beautiful. I am not against the body, I am all for it. I loved his body. I used to touch his face, and he would say, "Why do you touch my face with closed eyes?"

I said, "You are so beautiful, and I don't want to see anything else that may perhaps disturb me, so I keep my eyes closed...so I can dream you as beautiful as you are."

Do you note my words?--"so I can dream you as beautiful as you are. I want you to be my dream." But it was not only his body which was beautiful, nor his hair--I have never seen such beautiful hair, particularly on a man's head. I used to touch and play with his hair, and he would laugh.

Once he said, "This is something. Baba was mad, and now he has given me a master who is even madder. He told me that you would take his place, so I cannot prevent you from doing anything. Even if you cut off my head, I will be ready and willing for it."

I said, "Don't be afraid, I will not cut even a hair. As far as your head is concerned, Baba has done the job already. Only the hair is left." Then we both laughed. This happened many times, in many ways.

But he was beautiful, bodily, and psychologically too. Whenever I was in need, without asking, so as not to offend me, he would leave money in my pockets during the night. You know that I don't have any pockets. Do you know the story of how I lost my pockets? It was Masto. He used to put money, gold, anything that he could manage, into my pockets. Finally I dropped the very idea of having pockets; it tempts people. Either they cut your pocket open and become pickpockets, or very rarely, with a man like me, they become a person like Masto.

He would wait until I went to sleep. Once in a while I would pretend, as if I was asleep. I would even have to snore to convince him--then I would catch him red-handed, his hand in my pocket. I said, "Masto! Is this the way of a sage?" And we both laughed.

Finally I dropped the idea of having pockets. I am the only person in the world who needs no pockets at all. In a way it is good, because nobody can cut open my pockets. It is also good

that I don't have to carry any weight. Somebody else can always do it. I don't need to. I have not needed pockets for years; somebody has always managed for me....

But Masto looked like a god who had come to earth. I loved him--without any reason of course, because love cannot have any reason. I still love him. *glimps32*

Masto was the best choice that Baba could have made. I cannot in any way conceive of a better man. Not only was he a meditator...of course he was; otherwise there would have been no communion possible between him and me. And meditation simply means not being a mind, at least for the time you are meditating.

But that was not all; he was many more things. He was a beautiful singer, but he never sang for the public. We both used to laugh at the phrase, "the public." It consists of only the most retarded children. It is a wonder how they manage to gather at a place at a certain appointed time. I cannot explain it. Masto said he could not explain it either. It just cannot be explained.

He never sang for the public, but only for a very few people who loved him, and they had to promise never to talk about it. His voice was really "his master's voice." Perhaps he was not singing, but only allowing the existence--that's the only proper word that I can use--he was allowing existence to flow through him. He was not preventing; that was his merit.

He was also a talented sitar player, but again, I have never seen him playing before a crowd. Often I was the only one present when he played, and he would tell me to lock the door, saying, "Please lock the door, and whatsoever happens, don't open it until I am dead." And he knew that if I wanted to open the door I would have to kill him first, and then open it. I would keep my promise. But his music was such.... He was not known to the world: the world missed.

He said, "These things are so intimate that it is prostitution to play before a crowd." That was his exact word, 'prostitution'. He was really a philosopher, a thinker, and very logical, not like me. With Pagal Baba I had only one thing in common: that was the madness. Masto had many things in common with him. Pagal Baba was interested in many things. I certainly could not be a representative of Pagal Baba, but Masto was. I cannot be anybody's representative whosoever.

Masto did so much for me in every way that I could not believe how Baba had known that he would be the right person. And I was a child and needed much direction--and not an easy child either. Unless I was convinced I would not move an inch. In fact I would move back a little just to be safe. *glimps33*

You will be surprised to know that Masto played many instruments. He was really a versatile genius, a very fertile mind, and he could make anything beautiful out of anything. He painted and as meaninglessly as even Picasso could not do, and as beautifully as certainly Picasso could not do. But he simply destroyed his paintings saying, "I don't want to leave any footprints on the sands of time." *glimps35*

Osho's interest in death

At the age of fourteen, my family again became disturbed that I would die. I survived, but then I again tried it consciously. I said to them, "If death is going to occur as the astrologer has said, then it is better to be prepared. And why not give a chance to death? Why should I not go and meet it half way? If I am going to die, then it is better to die consciously."

So I took leave from my school for seven days. I went to my principal and I told him, "I am going to die."

He said, "What nonsense you are talking! Are you committing suicide? What do you mean you are going to die?"

I told him about the astrologer's prediction that the possibility of death would confront me every seven years. I told him, "I am going into retreat for seven days to wait for death. If death comes, it is good to meet it consciously so that it becomes an experience."

I went to a temple just outside of my village. I arranged with the priest that he should not disturb me. It was a very lonely, unvisited temple--old, in ruins. No one ever came to it. So I told him, "I will remain in the temple. You just give me once a day something to eat and something to drink, and the whole day I will be lying there waiting for death."

For seven days I waited. Those seven days became a beautiful experience. Death never came, but on my part I tried in every way to be dead. Strange, weird feelings happened. Many things happened, but the basic note was this--that if you are feeling you are going to die, you become calm and silent. Nothing creates any worry then because all worries are concerned with life. Life is the basis of all worries. When you are going to die anyway one day, why worry?

I was lying there. On the third or fourth day a snake entered the temple. It was in view, I was seeing the snake, but there was no fear. Suddenly I felt very strange. The snake was coming nearer and nearer, and I felt very strange. There was no fear, so I thought, "When death is coming, it may be coming through this snake, so why be afraid? Wait!"

The snake crossed over me and went away. Fear had disappeared. If you accept death, there is no fear. If you cling to life, then every fear is there.

Many times flies came around me. They would fly around, they would creep over me, on my face. Sometimes I felt irritated and would have liked to throw them off, but then I thought, "What is the use? Sooner or later I am going to die, and then no one will be here to protect the body. So let them have their way."

The moment I decided to let them have their way, the irritation disappeared. They were still on the body, but it was as if I was not concerned. They were as if moving, as if creeping on someone else's body. There was a distance immediately. If you accept death, a distance is created. Life moves far away with all its worries, irritations, everything. I died in a way, but I came to know that something deathless is there. Once you accept death totally, you become aware of it.

Then again at the age of twenty-one, my family was waiting. So I told them, "Why do you go on waiting? Do not wait. Now I am not going to die."

Physically, someday I will die, of course. However, this prediction of the astrologer helped me very much because he made me aware very early on about death. Continuously, I could meditate and could accept that it was coming.

Death can be used for deep meditation because then you become inactive. Energy is released from the world; it can move inwards. That is why a deathlike posture is suggested. Use life, use death, for discovering that which is beyond both. *vbt24*

In the East we have been watching the death experience of people. How you die reflects your whole life, how you lived. If I can see just your death, I can write your whole biography--because in that one moment your whole life becomes condensed. In that one moment, like a lightning, you show everything.

A miserly person will die with clenched fists--still holding and clinging, still trying not to die, still trying not to relax. A loving person will die with open fists--sharing...even sharing his death as he shared his life. You can see everything written on the face--whether this man has lived his life fully alert, aware. If he has, then on his face there will be a light shining; around his body there will be an aura. You come close to him and you will feel silent--not sad, but silent. It even happens that if a person has died blissfully in a total orgasm you will feel suddenly happy near him.

It happened in my childhood. A very saintly person in my village died. I had a certain attachment towards him. He was a priest in a small temple, a very poor man, and whenever I would pass--and I used to pass at least twice a day; when going to the school near the temple, I would pass--he would call me and he would always give me some fruit, some sweet.

When he died, l was the only child who went to see him. The whole town gathered. Suddenly I could not believe what happened--I started laughing. My father was there; he tried to stop me because he felt embarrassed. A death is not a time to laugh. He tried to shut me up. He told me again and again, 'You keep quiet!'

But I have never felt that urge again. Since then I have never felt it; never before had I ever felt it--to laugh so loudly, as if something beautiful has happened.

And I could not hold myself. I laughed loudly, everybody was angry, I was sent back, and my father told me, 'Never again are you to be allowed in any serious situation! Because of you, even I was feeling very embarrassed. Why were you laughing? What was happening there? What is there in death to laugh about? Everybody was crying and weeping and you were laughing.'

And I told him, 'Something happened. That old man released something and it was tremendously beautiful. He died an orgasmic death.' Not exactly these words, but I told him that I felt he was very happy dying, very blissful dying, and I wanted to participate in his laughter. He was laughing, his energy was laughing.

I was thought mad. How can a man die laughing? Since then I have been watching many deaths, but I have not seen that type of death again.

When you die, you release your energy and with that energy your whole life's experience. Whatsoever you have been--sad, happy, loving, angry, passionate, compassionate--whatsoever you have been, that energy carries the vibrations of your whole life. Whenever a saint is dying, just being near him is a great gift; just to be showered with his energy is a great inspiration. You will be put in a totally different dimension. You will be drugged by his energy, you will feel drunk.

Death can be a total fulfillment, but that is possible only if life has been lived. *nirvan09*

It was one of my pastimes in my childhood to follow every funeral procession. My parents were continually worried: "You don't know the man who has died, you have no relationship, no friendship with him. Why should you bother and waste your time?"--because the Indian funeral takes three, four or five hours.

First, going out of the city, the procession walking, taking the dead body, and then burning the body on the funeral pyre.... And you know Indians, they can't do anything efficiently: the funeral pyre won't catch fire; it will just live half-heartedly and the man will not burn. And everybody is making all kinds of effort because they want to get away from there as quickly as possible. But the dead people are also tricky. They will try their hardest to keep you there as long as possible.

I told my parents, "It is not a question of being related to somebody. I am certainly related with death, that you cannot deny. It does not matter who dies--it is symbolic to me. One day I will be dying. I have to know how people behave with the dead, how the dead behave with the living people; otherwise, how am I going to learn?"

They said, "You bring strange arguments."

"But," I said, "you have to convince me that death is not related to me, that I am not going to die. If you can convince me of that, I will stop going; otherwise let me explore." They could not say to me that I would not be dying, so I said, "then just keep quiet. I am not telling *you* to go. And I enjoy everything that happens there."

The first thing I have observed is that nobody talks about death, even there. The funeral pyre is burning somebody's father, somebody's brother, somebody's uncle, somebody's friend, somebody's enemy: he was related to many people in many ways. He is dead--and they are all engaged in trivia.

They would be talking about the movies, they would be talking about the politics, they would be talking about the market; they would be talking about all kinds of things, except death. They would make small cliques and sit all around the funeral pyre. I would go from one clique to another: nobody was talking about death. And I know for certain that they were talking about other things to keep them occupied so that they didn't see the burning body--because it was their body too.

They could see, if they had a little insight into things, that *they* are burning there on the funeral pyre--nobody else. It is only a question of time. Tomorrow somebody else from these people will be there on the funeral pyre; the day after tomorrow somebody else will be--every day people are being brought to the funeral pyre. One day I am going to be brought to the funeral pyre, and this is the treatment that these people will be giving to me. This is their last farewell: they are talking about prices going up, the rupee devaluating--in front of death. And they are all sitting with their backs toward the funeral pyre.

They *had* to come, so they have come, but they never wanted to come. So they want to be there almost absently present, just to fulfill a social conformity, just to show that they were present. And that too is to make sure that when they die they will not be taken by the municipal corporation truck. Because they have participated in so many people's death, naturally it becomes obligatory for other people to give them a send-off. They know why they are there--they are there because they want people to be there when they are on the funeral pyre.

But what are these people doing? I asked people whom I knew. Sometimes one of my teachers was there, talking about stupid things--that somebody is flirting with somebody's wife.... I said, "Is this the time to talk about somebody's wife and what she is doing? Think about the wife of this man who has died. Nobody is worried about that, nobody is talking about that.

"Think of your wife when you will be dead. With whom will she be flirting? What will she do? Have you made any arrangements for that? And can't you see the stupidity? Death is present and you are trying to avoid it in every possible way." But all the religions have done that. And these people are simply representing certain traditions of certain religions. *person12*

One of my teachers died. He was a funny man, very fat, and he used to have a very ancient type of turban--very big, maybe thirty-six feet long or more. Thirty-six feet is normal for the old, ancient turban. His face was also such that you could not remain looking at him without smiling. And he was my Sanskrit teacher.

He was a simple man--in fact a simpleton. We had been playing all kinds of tricks on him, and he was never able to find out who had done it; he never punished anybody. We had been

really hard on him. He would fall from the chair, because we had managed to cut the legs of the chair before he came. He would fall from the chair, his turban would fall all over the class, and there would be great laughter. But he would start putting his turban back on and writing on the board again, not getting disturbed. He was really a nice fellow.

He died. We used to call him Bhole Baba. That was not his name. *Baba* is simply used for grandfather, a respectful word. *Bhole* means a simpleton, so innocent that anybody can deceive him. I have completely forgotten his name, because we never used his name; we always used Bhole Baba. I have been trying to figure out what was his real name, but I cannot find it anywhere in my mind.

When I went to his house with my father, his wife came running from inside the house, fell on the chest of that poor fellow, and said, "Oh, my Bhole Baba!" I could not contain my laughter. My father tried telling me, "Keep quiet!"

I said, "The more I try to keep quiet, the more it is becoming difficult. I cannot contain it; let me laugh!" But everybody was shocked: somebody is dead, and you are laughing so loudly. I said, "Please, don't be shocked. If you knew the whole thing as I do, you would all be laughing."

And I told the whole thing, that he was always getting irritated by being called Bhole Baba. And we used to write on the blackboard every day, "Welcome, Bhole Baba". And the first thing he would do was, he would erase it. And now the poor man was dead and his own wife...

When I told them this, everybody started laughing. And the wife also became silent and said, "It is really strange for me to call him Bhole Baba, because I used to tell that boy not to call him Bhole Baba, that it is not his name."

And who was the boy? Mostly I was the boy who always going past his house, would knock on the door and say, "Is Bhole Baba inside?" And the wife knew me. With the door closed she would say, "No, he is not inside"--he was always inside--"But remember, don't call him Bhole Baba! If you stop calling him Bhole Baba, I can open the door and you can find him inside."

Perhaps continually hammering, "Bhole Baba, Bhole Baba," then at the moment of death.... Of course, a Hindu wife is not supposed to say her husband's name. She cannot, that is thought to be disrespectful--just the male chauvinistic mind. The man can call her by her name, but the woman cannot call her husband by his name. So perhaps...there was no time to figure out what to say; Bhole Baba came in handy.

But even the wife started laughing, thinking that this was really hilarious. "My whole life I have been telling you and other boys who are your friends...who you have been telling that whenever they pass the door, they should knock and enquire, `Is Bhole Baba inside?'"

The death became a laughter. But back home, my father said, "I am not going to take you to another death, another cremation--not with me, at least. What you have done is not right."

I said, "Everybody laughed--even the wife who was crying, started laughing. You should all be grateful to me that I made even death nonserious, fun, a joke." *false22*

I had a girlfriend when I was young. Then she died. But on her deathbed she promised me she would come back. And I was afraid. And she has come back. The name of the girlfriend was Shashi. She died in `47. She was the daughter of a certain doctor, Dr. Sharma, of my village. He is also dead now. And now she has come as Vivek*...to take care of me. Vivek cannot remember it. I used to call Shashi `Gudia', and I started calling Vivek `Gudia' also, just to give a continuity.

Life is a great drama, a great play--it goes on from one life to another to another. *plove02*

*Note: Vivek met Osho again in 1971 see Part VI

The first woman I loved was my mother-in-law. You will be surprised: am I married? No, I am not married. That woman was Gudia's mother, but I used to call her my mother-in-law, just as a joke. I have remembered it again after so many years. I used to call her mother-in-law because I loved her daughter. That was Gudia's previous life. Again, that woman was tremendously powerful, just like my grandmother.

My "mother-in-law" was a rare woman, especially in India. She left her husband, went to Pakistan and married a Mohammedan even though she was a brahmin. She knew how to dare. I always like the quality of daring, because the more you dare, the nearer you come to home. Only the daredevils ever become buddhas, remember! The calculating ones can have a good bank balance but cannot become buddhas. *glimps03*

1947 Indian Independence

You are asking: *You were in India at the time that India gained her independence from Britain. What kind of an affect did that have on you after living under the British rule, and then not to have them anymore. It must have been rather traumatic for most Indians.*

I am a little eccentric. I was more pro-British than pro-Indian.... Because everything that has happened in India--technology, science, education, colleges, universities, railway lines, roads, cars, airplanes--everything has happened because of the British rule. If there had been no British rule, India would have been the same as Ethiopia.

Before the British rule, for thousands of years they were burning women alive if their husbands died. Husbands were never burned when their wives died. I don't see.... It is a simple arithmetic: this is a male chauvinist society. The husband is trying to control even after

his death. The wife was forced in such a ugly way that if you visualize the whole scene you would not believe it. And these are the Hindus who talk about great spirituality....

And this was all religious ritual. For thousands of years they have been doing that. The whole credit goes to the British empire, that they prevented it; they made it criminal. It *was* criminal.

For thousands of years India has been poor. It is said in Hindu scriptures that people never used locks on their houses. Even if they were going for few months' pilgrimage they would not use locks, because there was no fear of anybody stealing. This is absolutely wrong. My understanding is that first they had nothing to be stolen; second, locks were not yet invented.

Indians are so lousy--they will not try to do anything. They would rather starve, but they will not make any effort to become rich. The country is tremendously capable of becoming rich, but the people's minds are not able to use the opportunity.

Before Britain came into India's history, these poor people were giving birth to ten children. Only one would survive and nine would die. There was no medicine, no medical care. Now, because of Britain, it is just the opposite: out of ten children only one dies, nine live. And that one also dies because of Indian stupidity...because Mahatma Gandhi was against vaccination, he was against allopathy; he was against everything that has been invented after the spinning wheel. And nobody knows when the spinning wheel was invented--perhaps ten thousand years before. After that, everything is evil.

It seems God made the spinning wheel on the sixth day, and after that.... Anything: railway trains, telegraph, post offices, telephones, radios, televisions--Gandhi was against all these things; he would not agree to them. *last203*

In my childhood I have seen it in my village: people who smoked used to carry two stones, the white stones which are available on the shore of any river. They would put a little cotton between those two stones and rub the cotton between them; that rubbing would create fire, the cotton would burn up. That was perhaps the most primitive lighter. Perhaps they are still doing it. I have not been to my village for many years--they must still be doing it. Who will bother about a modern lighter?--you need petrol and you need this and you need that. Those poor people can just get two stones from anywhere, and carry those stones with them. It is the simplest and cheapest way, and they can create fire anywhere. *person13*

Karl Marx was not wrong when he said that religions have functioned as the opium of the people. I am not a Marxist but this statement I cannot deny, he is absolutely right. Religions have proved to be opium.

In Indian villages where women go to work in the fields, or somewhere where a road is being made, or a bridge is being made, and the women working have small children.... One day I was just walking by the side of the river, a bridge was being built and there was a small child under a tree, so happy, so joyous, so ecstatic. I could not believe...what could be the cause of it? So I waited by the side of the tree. His mother was working on the bridge, and she

came back to give some milk to the child. I said to her, "You have a really great child. I have never come across such a psychedelic child in my whole life."

She said, "It is nothing. We poor people, what can we do? We cannot afford somebody to take care of the child, so we give the child some opium. Whether he is hungry or thirsty, whether it is hot or cold, it does not matter. In his opium, he is enjoying paradise." *exist06*

I know poor people, utterly poor, who have nothing; it is so difficult for them to even manage one meal a day. Sometimes they have to just drink water and sleep--water to fill their empty belly so they can feel that something is there. But they are in a certain way satisfied, they have accepted it as their fate, they don't think that things can be better than this. You can provoke them. You can put the fire in their minds very easily--just give them hope. But then sooner or later they are going to hold you by your neck: "Where are the hopes?" *unconc04*

The misery is not really only materialistic. I have seen the poorest people happy. They don't have anything, but they have not based their life philosophy on wrong ideas. It is more a question of what kind of spirituality you have accepted. Is it something beyond death? Is your spirituality not of this world but of some other world? *sword01*

Before India became independent there was such a feeling all over India. My house was a place of conspiracy. My two uncles had been in jail many times, and every week they had to go to the police station to report that they were not doing anything against the government, and that they were still there. They were not allowed to move out of the town but people were coming to them--and they all had so much hope.

I was a small child but I always wondered, "These people are saying that just by becoming independent, all misery will disappear. How can it happen? I don't see any connection." But there was hope. There was the promised land, very close by; just a little struggle and you would reach it. There was suffering but you were not responsible for it: the Britishers were responsible. It was a great consolation to dump everything on the Britishers.

In fact, I used to ask these revolutionaries who used to visit my house secretly, or sometimes stay in my house for months.... One of them, a very famous revolutionary, Bhavani Prasad Tiwari, was the national leader of the socialist party. Whenever he had to go underground he used to come to my village and just live in my house, hidden. For the whole day he would not come out--and nobody knew him in the village anyway. But I was after him. He told me again and again, "You bring such inconvenient questions that sometimes I think it would be better to be in a British jail than in your house! At least there I would get first class treatment."

He was a famous leader so he would have got first class treatment--political prisoners' special class--with all the facilities, good food, good library. And at least he would get freedom, because first class prisoners were not forced to do any labor. They would write their autobiographies and other books: all the great books these great Indian leaders have written were written in jails. And they would go for walks--they were put in beautiful places that were not even jails; they were created especially for them.

For example in Poona there was a palace just on the other side of the river: the Aga Khan palace. It *was* a palace. Gandhi was kept prisoner there and his wife too. His wife died there, her grave is still there in the Aga Khan's palace. In Poona--when you pass the bridge, just on top of the hill above there is a beautiful house....

So these special palaces were turned into prisons. They had acres of greenery, beautiful views. So Bhavani Prasad Tiwari used to say to me, "It would be better if I stop going underground--because you ask inconvenient questions."

I said, "If you cannot answer them, what is going to happen to the country when the country becomes independent? These will be the questions which you will have to solve. You cannot even answer them verbally, and then you will have to actually solve them. I asked him, "Just by the Britishers leaving the country"--and there were not many Britishers--how is poverty going to disappear? And do you want me to believe that before the Britishers came to India, India was not poor?

"It was as poor as it is now, perhaps even poorer, because the Britishers brought industry, technology, and that helped the country to become a little better. They brought education, schools, colleges, universities. Before that, there was no way to be educated: the only educated people were the brahmins, because the father would teach the son. They kept everybody else uneducated because that was the best way to keep them enslaved. Education can become dangerous.

"How are you going to destroy poverty? How are you going to destroy the hundreds of kinds of anxieties and miseries which have nothing to do with the British? Now, a husband is suffering because of his wife--how is it going to help? The Britishers have gone, okay; but the wife will still be there, the husband will still be there--how is it going to change anything?"

He said, "I know it is very difficult, but let us first get independence."

I said, "I know after independence the problems will be the same, perhaps worse."

They *are* worse. *ignor01*

India became independent in 1947. I was very young, but I had kept my eyes clear and uncontaminated by the older generation. From my very childhood I have insisted on having my own insight, my own intelligence, and I don't want to borrow any knowledge from anybody.

My whole family was involved in the struggle for the freedom of the country. Everybody had been in jail. Although I was never in jail because of the liberation movement, I suffered as much as one can suffer, because all the earning males were forced into jails and the family was left without any source of earning.

I asked my father, "Are you aware that once you are liberated from the British empire...and it is going to happen, because now Britain is burdened. They have exploited the land to the

maximum; now the situation has reversed--they have to help the country to survive. It is better for them to escape from here and get rid of a burden which has become absolutely unnecessary." They were not here to serve the people, they were here to exploit. And that's exactly what happened.

The revolution happened in 1942 without any effect. It was quashed completely within nine days, and with those nine days all hope of freedom disappeared. But suddenly, out of the blue, Britain decided in 1947 to make the country free.

I told my father, "Don't think that your freedom movement has succeeded. Between the freedom movement and the actual coming of freedom there is a five-year gap. This is not logical. You are being given freedom because now you have become a burden and a trouble, just your existence."

And I have come to know that researchers, looking into the whole history of the British Parliament and their decisions, found out that the British Prime Minister Attlee sent Mountbatten with the message: "Do it as quickly as possible." He had given him a set time, that, "by 1948 we should get rid of this burden."

Mountbatten proved even more efficient. He managed it one year earlier. But I told my father, "You have been fighting, not knowing that once this country is free it will start having new fights, within itself."

Now Mohammedans have taken Pakistan--it was part and parcel of the freedom, because Mohammedans refused to live with the Hindus. They had lived together for almost fourteen hundred years and there was no problem. In my childhood I have participated in Mohammedan celebrations; Mohammedans were participating in Hindu marriages, Hindu celebrations. There was no question of fight, because everybody was fighting the British empire. Once the British empire was leaving, suddenly the Mohammedans and Hindus became alert--a new division. They declared that they could not live together because their religions are different. Mohammedans became adamant: "Either the British empire remains...we can risk freedom, but we cannot live with Hindus in an independent country because they are in the majority. They will rule, and Mohammedans don't have any chance of ruling." *mani20*

My feeling is that Britain has done two things wrong: in the first place, it imposed slavery on the country; in the second place, like cowards it escaped from its responsibility. Britain should have remained there till they had educated people not to be violent, not to be superstitious, not to be against each other--Hindus against Mohammedans, Mohammedans against Buddhists, Buddhists against Jainas. There are so many sects and subsects, and everybody is against everybody else. And that the country is spiritual, and nonviolence is its ideology--this is all nonsense. This is just hypocrisy.

Britain has done a very lousy job. I was certainly angry with Lord Mountbatten. He was the wrong person to send to India to make India free. He had no experience of politics. In fact, he was just a playboy his whole life. Just to keep him away from England--because he belonged

to the royalty, and if a person belonging to the royalty is a playboy, then everybody's wife is in danger, everybody is in danger--so they kept continuously sending him out of England. But you cannot send him out just like that--he was royalty, he could have been the king; it was just by chance that he was not the eldest son.

First they sent him to Burma. When he came back from Burma, immediately he was told, "Pack your luggage and go to India. You have a great job to do: make India independent."

Just think, the sheer immensity of the work! When you make a country a slave for hundreds of years you have to fight, and within a day you can make it independent. I don't see the logic. Even when I was only seventeen, I could not see the logic of it. I wrote a letter to Lord Mountbatten that this is not the right time for this country to be independent. If everything is peaceful, it is simply cold war. Once the pressure of British control is gone, then.... *last203*

Just close to my town, beyond the river, was a small state, Bhopal. The king was Mohammedan, the population was Hindu, so everywhere there were riots because the population wanted the state to merge with India, and the king wanted to merge it with Pakistan because he was Mohammedan. But it was in the middle of India so it was not easy to merge with Pakistan. There was a great fight between the king's forces and the population, and we were just on the other side of the river. We could see from this side people being killed on the other side.

We caught four dead people who were killed by the forces of the king; somehow they must have fallen in the river, and they came to our side so we caught hold of them. Naturally, I had to persuade people, "This is not good. They have been fighting for the freedom of the country; they wanted the country to merge into India--you should not leave them like that."

They wanted to throw them into the river and be finished: who could be bothered with them? But somehow I gathered a few young people, and then a few old people felt ashamed and they came.

But first, before we could do anything they had to be postmortemed, so we took them to the hospital. The postmortem place was almost two furlongs away behind the hospital, in the jungle. One can understand that they were cutting up bodies...the smell and everything, so they had made the place that far away outside the city. But we had to carry these four corpses.

That was the first time I saw a brown bag open. The doctor was the father of one of my friends so he allowed me in. He said, "You can see how man looks inside," and he opened the bodies. It was really shocking to see how man looks inside. And this was only the body: later on I saw the postmortem of the mind also. Compared to that it is nothing, this is only the poor body. Your mind is so rich in crap....

That day one thing happened that I have to tell you, although it is not concerned with what I was going to tell you--but it must be concerned in some way, otherwise why should I remember it?

When we were carrying out the bodies after they were postmortemed.... They put them together again and covered them. One of the leaders of my town, Shri Nath Batt, had always felt as if I was his enemy, for the simple reason that I was a friend of his son and he thought I was corrupting him--and in a way he was right. By chance it happened that we were carrying a corpse together; I was ahead, holding both the poles at the front of the stretcher, and Shri Nath Batt was behind me holding the end of the two poles.

The head of the man, the dead man, was at my end, and the legs at his end. I had just read somewhere that when a man dies of course he loses all control--control over the bladder also, so if you put his head upwards and his legs downwards.... I thought, "This is a good chance to see whether that idea is right or wrong," so I just raised the poles.... And you should have seen what happened--because that corpse pissed and Shri Nath Batt ran away!

And we could not persuade him to come back. He said, "I cannot. Have you ever heard of a dead man pissing? It is a ghost!"

I told him, "You are the leader."

He said, "To hell with the leader! I don't want to be the leader if this is the kind of work I have to do. And I've always known you--from the very beginning. Why did you raise those poles?"

I said, "I don't know, it must have been the ghost. I suddenly felt like somebody was raising my hands up; I am not at all responsible." I had to drag that body alone, for two furlongs, to the hospital.

Shri Nath Batt was in the town telling everybody, "This boy is going to kill somebody someday. Today just by God's grace I am saved. That ghost just pissed over me, on my clothes. And that boy persuaded me: `You have to come because you are the leader; otherwise what will people think?--a leader in times of need, missing. Then remember, at voting time I will not be of any help.' So I went there, but I never thought that he would do such a thing to me." *dark03*

It has always been a problem.... In my whole life I have not been able to vote, for the simple reason that whenever the officers reached me to fill in the form so that I could be a valid voter, there was a clause, "What is your religion?"

I said, "I don't have any religion. I am a religious person."

They said, "But all the clauses have to be filled in."

I said, "Then you can take your form back. I am not so much interested in voting anyway, because it is an unnecessary anxiety when you have to choose between two idiots. Whom to vote for?--whoever you vote for, you are voting for an idiot. It is better not to vote, at least your hands are clean. You can see: my hands are absolutely clean!" *rebel10*

Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi

In January 1948 Mahatma Gandhi is assassinated:

To me, at that age, Mahatma Gandhi appeared to be only a businessman. I have spoken against him thousands of times because I don't agree with anything in his philosophy of life. But the day he was shot dead--I was seventeen--my father caught me weeping.

He said, "You, and weeping for Mahatma Gandhi? You have always been arguing against him." My whole family was Gandhian, they had all gone to jail for following his politics. I was the only black sheep, and they were, of course, all pure white. Naturally he asked, "Why are you weeping?"

I said, "I am not only weeping but I want to participate in the funeral. Don't waste my time because I have to catch the train, and this is the last one that will get there on time."

He was even more astonished. He said, "I can't believe it! Have you gone mad?"

I said, "We will discuss that later on. Don't be worried, I will be coming back."

And do you know that when I reached Delhi, Masto was on the platform waiting for me. He said, "I thought that however much you are against Gandhi, you still have a certain regard for the man. That is only my feeling...." He then said, "It may or may not be so, but I depended on it. And this is the only train that passes through your village. If you were to come, I knew you would have to be on this train; otherwise you would not be coming. So I came to receive you, and my feeling was right."

I said to him, "If you had spoken before about my feeling for Gandhi, I would not have argued with you, but you were always trying to convince me, and then it is not a question of feeling, it is pure argument. Either you win, or the other fellow wins. If you had mentioned only once that it is a question of feeling, I would not have even touched that subject at all, because then there would have been no argument."

Particularly--just so that it is on the record--I want to say to you that there were many things about Mahatma Gandhi that I loved and liked, but his whole philosophy of life was absolutely disagreeable to me. So many things about him that I would have appreciated remained neglected. Let us put the record right.

I loved his truthfulness. He never lied; even though in the very midst of all kinds of lies, he remained rooted in his truth. I may not agree with his truth, but I cannot say that he was not truthful. Whatsoever was truth to him, he was full of it.

It is a totally different matter that I don't think his truth to be of any worth, but that is my problem, not his. He never lied. I respect his truthfulness, although he knows nothing of the truth--which I am continuously forcing you to take a jump into....

But there are a few things about him that I respect and love--like his cleanliness. Now, you will say, "Respect for such small things...?" No, they are not small, particularly in India, where saints, so-called saints, are expected to live in all kinds of filth. Gandhi tried to be clean. He was the cleanest ignorant man in the world. I love his cleanliness.

I also love that he respected all religions. Of course, my reasons and his are different. But at least he respected all religions--of course for the wrong reasons, because he did not know what truth is, so how could he judge what was right, or whether any religions were right, whether all were right, or whether any ever could be right? There was no way. Again, he was a businessman, so why irritate anybody? Why annoy them?...

I disagree with him, and yet I know he has a few small qualities worth millions.

His simplicity...nobody could write so simply and nobody could make so much effort just to be simple in his writing. He would try for hours to make a sentence more simple, more telegraphic. He would reduce it as much as possible, and whatsoever he thought true, he tried to live it sincerely. That it was not true is another matter, but about that what could he do? He thought it was true. I pay him respect for his sincerity, and that he lived it whatsoever the consequences. He lost his life just because of that sincerity.

With Mahatma Gandhi, India lost its whole past, because never before was anybody in India shot dead or crucified. That had not been the way of this country. Not that they are very tolerant people, but just so snobbish, they don't think anybody is worth crucifying...they are far higher.

With Mahatma Gandhi India ended a chapter, and also began a chapter. I wept, not because he had been killed--because everybody has to die, there is not much in it. And it is better to die the way he died, rather than dying on a hospital bed--particularly in India. It was a clean and beautiful death in that way. And I am not protecting the murderer, Nathuram Godse. He is a murderer, and about him I cannot say, "Forgive him because he did not know what he was doing." He knew exactly what he was doing. He cannot be forgiven. Not that I am hard on him, just factual.

I had to explain all this to my father later on, after I came back. And it took me many days, because it is really a complicated relationship between me and Mahatma Gandhi. Ordinarily, either you appreciate somebody or you don't. It is not so with me--and not only with Mahatma Gandhi.

I'm really a stranger. I feel it every moment. I can like a certain thing about a person, but at the same time there may be something standing by the side of it which I hate, and I have to decide, because I cannot cut the person in two.

I decided to be against Mahatma Gandhi, not because there was nothing in him that I could have loved--there was much, but much more was there which had far-reaching implications for the whole world. I had to decide to be against a man I may have loved if--and that "if" is almost unbridgeable--if he had not been against progress, against prosperity, against

science, against technology. In fact, he was against almost everything for which I stand: more technology and more science, and more richness and affluence.

I am not for poverty, he was. I am not for primitiveness, he was. But still, whenever I see even a small ingredient of beauty, I appreciate it. And there were a few things in that man which are worth understanding.

He had an immense capacity to feel the pulse of millions of people together. No doctor can do it; even to feel the pulse of one person is very difficult, particularly a person like me. You can try feeling my pulse; you will even lose your pulse, or if not the pulse then at least the purse, which is even better!

Gandhi had the capacity to know the pulse of the people. Of course, I am not interested in those people, but that is another thing. I'm not interested in thousands of things; that does not mean that those who are genuinely working, intelligently reaching to some depth, are not to be appreciated. Gandhi had that capacity, and I appreciate it. I would have loved to meet him now, because when I was only a ten-year-old lad, all that he could get from me were those three rupees. Now I could have given him the whole paradise--but that was not to happen, at least in this life. *glimps45*

Osho's early experiences as story-teller

and public speaker

I love stories, and all this started with my Nani. She was a lover of stories too. Not that she used to tell me stories; just the contrary, she used to provoke me to tell her stories, all kinds of stories and gossips. She listened so attentively that she made me into a story teller. Just for her I would find something interesting, because she would wait the whole day just to listen to my story. If I could not find anything, then I would invent. She is responsible: all credit or blame, whatsoever you call it, goes to her. I invented stories to tell her just so she would not be disappointed, and I can promise you that I became a successful story teller just for her sake.

I started winning in competitions when I was just a child in primary school, and that continued to the very end, when I left university. I collected so many prizes, medals and cups and shields and whatnot, that my grandmother became just a young girl again. Whenever she would bring someone to show them my prizes and awards, she was no longer an old woman, she became almost young again. Her whole house became almost a museum because I went on sending her my prizes. Up till high school, of course, I was almost a resident in her house. It was just for courtesy's sake that I used to visit my parents in the daytime; but the night was hers, because that was the time to tell the stories.

I can still see myself by the side of her bed, with her listening so attentively to what I was saying. Each word uttered by me was absorbed by her as if it were of immense value. And it became valuable just because she took it in with so much love and respect. When it had knocked on my door it was just a beggar, but when it entered into her house, it was no longer the same person. The moment she called me, saying, "Raja! Now tell me what happened to you today--the whole thing. Promise me you will not leave out anything at all," the beggar dropped all that made him look like a beggar; now he was a king. Every day I had to promise her, and even though I told her everything that happened, she would insist, "Tell me something more," or "Tell me that one again."

Many times I said to her, "You will spoil me; both you and Shambhu Babu are spoiling me forever." And they really did their job well. I collected hundreds of awards. There was not a single high school in the whole state where I had not spoken and won--except once....

In fact my grandmother's house had become, by and by, just a museum for my shields, cups and medals. But she was very happy, immensely happy. It was a small house to be cluttered with all this rubbish, but she was happy that I went on sending her all my prizes, from college and from the university. I went on and on, and every year I won dozens of cups, either for debate or for eloquence or for story-telling competitions.

But I tell you one thing: both she and Shambhu Babu spoiled me by their being so attentive. They taught me, without teaching, the art of speaking. When somebody listens so attentively, you immediately start saying something you had not planned or even imagined; it simply flows. It is as if attention becomes magnetic and attracts that which is hidden in you.

My own experience is that this world will not become a beautiful place to live in unless everybody learns how to be attentive. Right now, nobody is attentive. Even when people are showing that they are listening; they are not listening, they are doing a thousand other things. Hypocrites just pretending...but not the way an attentive listener should be--just all attention, just attention and nothing else, just open. Attention is a feminine quality, and everybody who knows the art of attention, of being attentive, becomes, in a certain sense, very feminine, very fragile, soft; so soft that you could scratch him with just your nails.

My Nani would wait the whole day for the time when I would come back home to tell her stories. And you will be surprised how, unknowingly, she prepared me for the job that I was going to do. It was she who first heard many of the stories that I have told you. It was her to whom I could tell any nonsense without any fear.

The other person, Shambhu Babu, was totally different from my Nani. My Nani was very intuitive, but not intellectual. Shambhu Babu was also intuitive, but intellectual too. He was an intellectual of the first grade. I have come across many intellectuals, some famous and some very famous, but none of them came close to Shambhu Babu. He was really a great synthesis. Assagioli would have loved the man. He had intuition plus intellect, and both not in small measure, but high peaks. He also used to listen to me, and would wait all day until school had finished. Every day after school was his.

The moment I was released from the prison, my school, I would first go to Shambhu Babu. He would be ready with tea and a few sweets that he knew I liked. I mention it because people rarely think of the other person. He always arranged things with the other person in mind. I have never seen anybody bother about the other as he did. Most people, although they prepare for others, they do it according to themselves really, forcing the other person to like what they themselves like.

That was not Shambhu Babu's way. His thinking of the other was one of the things I loved and respected in him. He always purchased things only after asking the shopkeepers what my Nani used to buy. I came to know this only after he died. Then the shopkeepers told me, the sweetmakers too, that "Shambhu Babu always used to ask a strange question: 'What does that old woman, who lives there alone near the river--what does she purchase from you?' We never bothered why he asked, but now we know: he was inquiring about what you liked."

I was also amazed that he was always ready with the very things that I liked. He was a man of the law, so naturally he found a way. From school I would rush to his house, take my tea and sweets that he had bought; then he was ready. Even before I had finished, he was ready to listen to what I had to tell him. He would say, "Just tell me anything you like. It's not a question of what you say, but that you say it."

His emphasis was very clear. I was left absolutely free, with not even a subject to talk about, free to say anything I wanted. He always added, "If you want to remain silent, you can. I will listen to your silence." And once in a while it would happen that I would not say a single thing. There was nothing to say.

And when I closed my eyes he too would close his eyes, and we would sit like the Quakers, just in silence. There were so many times, day after day, when I either spoke or else we stayed in silence. I once said to him, "Shambhu Babu, it looks a little strange for you to listen to a child. It would be more appropriate if you spoke and I listened."

He laughed and said, "That is impossible. I cannot say anything to you, and will not say anything ever, for the simple reason that I don't know. And I am grateful to you for making me aware of my ignorance."

Those two people gave me so much attention that in my early childhood I became aware of the fact, which only now psychologists are talking about, that attention is a kind of food, a nourishment. A child can be perfectly taken care of, but if he is not paid any attention there is every possibility that he will not survive. Attention seems to be the most important ingredient in one's nourishment. *glimps25*

I have been fortunate in that way. My Nani and Shambhu Babu started the ball rolling, and as it rolled on, it gathered more and more moss. Without ever learning how to speak, I became a speaker. I still don't know how to speak, and I have reached thousands of people--without even knowing how to begin. Can you see the amusing part of it? I must have spoken more than any man in the whole of history, although I am still only fifty-one.

I started speaking so early, yet I was not in any way what you call a speaker in the Western world. Not a speaker who says, "Ladies and Gentlemen," and all that nonsense--all borrowed and nothing experienced. I was not a speaker in that sense, but I spoke with my whole heart aflame, afire. I spoke not as an art but as my very life. And from my early schooldays it was recognized, not by one but by many, that my speaking seemed to be coming from my heart, that I was not trying parrotlike to repeat something I had prepared. Something spontaneous was being born, then and there. *glimps25*

I have never proved myself superior to anybody. I have never been assertive in that sense, of dominating. But I started speaking very early in my life, when I was in high school, and the principal was amazed. He could not believe that a student could speak in such a way.

Then I was speaking continuously throughout my whole university career. I had won so many shields, cups, inter-university competitions around India, that my mother started asking me, "Where are we going to keep all these things you go on bringing again and again?" But I have never learned speaking in a school, or oratory. I have never read a single book on how to speak, simply because I want to be just myself. Why should I read somebody else's book? I can speak in my own way.

And what is the problem? Everybody speaks, and everybody speaks beautifully. But something happens; if you are brought to the podium before the microphone, something strange happens. You forget speaking--which you have been doing since your very childhood. Standing before an audience of thousands of people, so many thousands of eyes on you, you become afraid whether you will be able to perform according to their expectations or not. It is, somewhere, your inferiority complex that gives you trouble. Otherwise, it is just the same whether you are talking to one person or you are talking to one million people.

If you are clean inside, having no wounds of inferiority, then who cares what people expect of you? You have never fulfilled anybody's expectations. You have been simply living your life according to your own insight, intuition, intelligence. And that's the way it should be. A healthy human being will not have an inferiority complex. *bond31*

I remember my first lecture.... It was in high school. All the high schools in the district had sent a speaker there. I was chosen to be the representative of my school, not because I was the best--I cannot say that--but only because I was the most troublesome. If I had not been chosen there would have been trouble, that much was certain. So they decided to choose me, but they were not aware that wherever I am, trouble starts anyway.

I started the speech without the normal address to "Mister President, Ladies and Gentlemen...." I looked the president up and down, and said to myself, "No, he does not look like a president." Then I looked around and said to myself, "No, nobody here seems to be either a lady or a gentleman, so unfortunately I have to begin my speech without addressing anybody in particular. I can only say, 'To whom it may concern.'"

Later on my principal called me, because I had still won the prize, even after this.

He said, "What happened to you? You behaved strangely. We prepared you but you never said a single word that you were taught. Not only you completely forgot the prepared lecture, you did not even address the president or the ladies or gentlemen."

I said, "I looked around, and there were no gentlemen. I knew all those fellows very well, and not one is a gentleman. As far as the ladies are concerned, they are even worse because they are the wives of these same fellows. And the president...he seems to have been sent by God to preside over all the meetings in this town. I am tired of him. I cannot call him 'Mister President' when in fact I would rather have hit him."

On that day, when the president had called me for my prize, I said, "Okay, but remember you will have to come down here and shake hands with me."

He said, "What! Shake hands with you! I will never even look at you. You insulted me."

I said, "I will show you."

Since that day he became my enemy. I know the art of how to make enemies. His name was Shri Nath Bhatt, a prominent politician in the town. Of course he was the leader of the most influential Gandhian political party. Those were the days when India was under (the influence of) the British Raj. Perhaps as far as freedom is concerned India is still not free. It may be free from the British Raj, but not free from the bureaucracy which the British Raj created. *glimps38*

I started saying in 1950 that birth control should be propagated, and anybody who opposes it should be thought a criminal. I was stoned, because I was speaking against religion, because children come from God. At that time, India had a population of four hundred million people. If they had listened to me, they would not have been in such a mess. Now their population is more than double--almost nine hundred million people.

But the politician is concerned only with his power. He is not concerned that by the end of this century, fifty million people will die of starvation in this country. Every street, every house will be surrounded by rotting corpses. In fact it will be better to die rather than to live amongst fifty million dead people--nobody will be able to take them to the graveyard or to the funeral pyre. *mess123*

When for the first time, somewhere in 1950, I entered a radio station studio for a lecture to be recorded.... They wanted to display it all over India, broadcast it, for the simple reason that I was so young and the director of the radio station had heard me speaking in a university debate. He could not believe what I was saying, so he invited me to the studio sometime "to record any subject you give me."

Obviously he was worried, because I was in a studio for the first time. I had never spoken in an empty room just in front of the microphone, so he said, "You will feel a little awkward, but just once or twice in the beginning it happens. It happens to everybody, so don't be worried."

I said, "I will not feel awkward, because I have been talking to the walls."

He said, "What do you mean 'to the walls'?"

I said, "That day also when you were listening and you got impressed and you brought me here--to you there were people, to me there were only empty benches. The people were gone in all directions. Nobody was there. It was absolutely empty; there were only walls around. So don't be worried."

He thought me a little crazy, but he said, "Okay, you do it. I will be watching you from the outside, giving you the signals when to start, when to stop."

I said, "Don't be worried. Just tell me the time, and I will start and I will stop, because you will be a constant disturbance standing there in the window"--it was enclosed with glass. "And from outside you will be making signs. Don't disturb me. You simply give me the time when I have to start. Ten-thirty?--I will start then. At ten-forty I will stop. You don't bother."

He watched from there, and he was very puzzled because it was as if I was talking to people, the way I am talking to you! He had seen many orators giving their speeches for records but he had never seen people moving their hands and talking and looking at people.

When he came in he said, "What were you doing?"

I said, "It is not a question of whether people are there or not--they are *never* there. And I can't speak without my hands. If you hold my hands I cannot speak a single word, because it is not only that a part of me is speaking, it is my whole being that is involved in it. My eyes, my hands, my whole body's involved. My whole body is saying something, is supporting what I am saying in words."

He said, "I don't understand you, because first you said that you always talk to the walls. That, I was puzzling about. And when I saw you talking here I saw that you are talking to people. I actually looked into the room to see if there was somebody."

I have been talking, many have been hearing, a few have been listening; and slowly slowly I have been sorting out those people who are capable of listening. *misery21*

Osho's growing library

But I have been collecting books from my high school days. You will be surprised that by the time I was a matriculate I had read thousands of books and collected hundreds of books of my own--and great masterpieces. I was finished with Khalil Gibran, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy,

Chekhov, Gorky, Turgenev--the best as far as writing is concerned. When I was finishing my intermediate I was finished with Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Bertrand Russell--all the philosophers that I could find in any library, in any bookshop, or borrow from anybody. *person04*

I have been interested in communism from my very childhood...communist literature--perhaps there is no book that is missing from my library. I have signed and dated each book before 1950. I was absolutely concerned to know about communism, everything. For three years, 1948, 1949, and 1950, I had collected all the literature possible. And I stopped at 1950. I have not read anything after 1950 about communism, for or against.

It is very strange...I go on forgetting small things. I cannot count up to five--after the third finger I start hesitating, whether it is fourth or third. But in these forty years I have not forgotten a single name of the communist revolutionaries. Small details are so vivid before me, because that was my first entry into the intellectual world. It got deeply rooted in me. But I never became a member of a communist party, because I could see something was missing.

It is a grand plan for humanity, but something central is missing: it has no soul, it is a corpse.

Because nothing new was happening, I stopped reading. And nothing new has happened since then, except Gorbachev.....

First I was deeply interested in communism, but finding that it is a corpse I became interested in anarchism--that was also a Russian phenomenon--Prince Kropotkin, Bakunin, Leo Tolstoy. All three were anarchists: no state, no government in the world. But I saw the point that they have a beautiful dream but with this criminal humanity, with this stupid mass, if there is no government and no court and no police there will be simply chaos, not anarchism.

I have been always very scientific in my approach, either outside or inside. Communism can be the base. Then spiritualism has to be its growth, to provide what is missing. *fire04*

No child has asked for respect. You ask for toys sweets, clothes, a bicycle, and things like that. You get them, but these are not the real things which are going to make your life blissful.

I asked him (my father) for money only when I wanted to purchase more books; I never asked money for anything else. And I told him, "When I ask for money for books you had better give it to me."

He said, "What do you mean?"

I said, "I simply mean that if you don't give it to me then I will have to steal it. I don't want to be a thief but if you force me then there is no way. You know I don't have money. I need these books and I am going to have them, that you know. So if money is not given to me then I will take it; and remember in your mind that it was you who forced me to steal."

He said, "No need to steal. Whenever you need money you simply come and take it."

And I said, "You be assured it is only for the books," but there was no need for the assurance because he went on seeing my library growing in the house. Slowly there was no place in the house for anything other than my books.

And my father said, "Now, first we had a library in our house, now in the library we have a house! And we all have to take care of your books because if something goes wrong with any book you make so much fuss, you create so much trouble that everybody is afraid of your books. And they are everywhere; you cannot avoid stumbling on them. And there are small children...."

I said, "Small children are not a problem to me; the problem is the older children. The smaller children--I respect them so much that they are very protective of my books."

It was a strange thing to see in my house. My younger brothers and sisters were all protective of my books when I was not there: nobody could touch my books. And they would clean them and they would keep them in the right place, wherever I had put them, so when I needed any book I could find it. And it was a simple matter because I was so respectful to them, and they could not show their respect in any other way than to be respectful to my books.

I said, "The real problems are the older children--my uncles, my aunts, my father's sisters, my father's brothers-in-law--these are the people who are the trouble. I don't want anybody else to mark my books, underline in my books, and these people go on doing that." I hated the very idea that somebody should underline in my books.

One of my father's brothers-in-law was a professor, so he must have been in the habit of underlining. And he found so many beautiful books, that whenever he used to come he would write notes on my books. I had to tell him, "This is simply not only unmannerly, uncivilized, it shows what kind of mind you have.

"I don't want books from the libraries, I don't read books from the libraries, for the simple reason that they are underlined, marked. Somebody else has emphasized something. I don't want that, because without your knowing, that emphasis enters your mind. If you are reading a book and something is underlined with red, that line stands out. You have read the whole page but that line stands out. It leaves a different impact on your mind.

"I have an aversion to reading somebody else's books, underlined, marked. To me it is just like somebody going to a prostitute. A prostitute is nothing but a woman underlined and marked--notes all over her from different people in different languages. You would like a woman fresh, not underlined by somebody else.

"To me a book is not just a book, it is a love affair. If you underline any book then you have to pay for it and take it. Then I don't want that book here, because one dirty fish can make the whole pond dirty. I don't want any book prostituted--you take it."

He was very angry because he could not understand. I said, "You don't understand me because you don't know me much. You just talk to my father."

And my father said to him, "It was your fault. Why did you underline his book? Why did you write a note in his book? What purpose did it serve to you?--because the book will remain in his library. In the first place you never asked his permission--that you wanted to read his book.

"Nothing happens here without his permission if it is his thing; because if you take his thing without permission then he starts taking everybody's things without permission. And that creates trouble. Just the other day one of my friends was going to catch the train and he took away his suitcase...."

My father's friend was going crazy: "Where is the suitcase?"

I said, "I know where it is, but in your suitcase there is one of my books. I am not interested in your suitcase, I am simply trying to save my book." I opened it--I had said, "Open the suitcase," but he was very reluctant because he had stolen the book--and the book was found. I said, "Now you pay the penalty, because this is simply barbarious.

"You were a guest here; we respected you, we served you. We did everything for you--and you steal a book of a poor boy who has no money: a boy who has to threaten his father that 'if you don't give me money then I am going to steal. And then don't ask, Why did I do it?--because then wherever I can steal, I will steal.'

"These books are not cheap--and you just kept it in your suitcase. You cannot deceive my eyes. When I enter my room I know whether my books are all there or not, whether something is missing."

So my father said to the professor who had underlined my book, "Never do that to him. Take this book and replace it with a fresh one."

My approach is simple:

Everybody has to be assertive, not aggressive. *misery15*

One of my brothers, my fourth brother, Niklanka, has been collecting everything concerning me from his very childhood. Everybody laughed at him. Even I asked him, "Niklanka, why do you bother to collect everything about me?"

He said, "I don't know, but somehow there is a deep feeling in me that someday these things will be needed."

I said, "Then go ahead. If you feel like that, go ahead, do it." And it is because of Niklanka that a few pictures of my childhood have been saved. He has collected things which now have significance.

He was always collecting things. Even if I threw something away in the wastepaper basket, he would search to see if I had thrown away something I had written. Whatsoever it was, he would collect it because of my handwriting. The whole town thought he was mad. People even said to me, "You are mad, and he seems to be even more mad!"

But he loved me as nobody in my whole family did--although they all loved me, but nobody like him.... *Glimps50*

1948 High School

You ask me: *Why were You so mischievous in Your childhood?*

Do you think I am different? Not a bit. I am still the same. I did not allow my childhood to be spoiled by anybody. And what you think of as mischievous, I have never thought about it in that way. Even today I don't think that anything I have ever done was a mischief I had my reasons, and very valid reasons.

For example: the first day I entered high school from my middle school.... In high school they used to have a prayer at the beginning of the day. It was a very famous song of Mirza Iqbal, who was one of the greatest Urdu poets of this age. As far as the language is concerned, it is certainly a great piece of art, but the philosophy behind it is ugly. The song says: "My country, my nation, is the best of all the nations. My country is a beautiful garden and we are nightingales in this garden...." And that's the way it goes on.

I said to the principal who was standing in front of the two thousand students and fifty teachers, "I will not participate in this prayer because to me this is absolute rubbish. Every country thinks of itself in the same way and every country has its ego in it.

"You ask the Chinese, you ask the Japanese, you ask the Germans, you ask the English, you ask anybody--they all think the same. So what Iqbal has written is simply rubbish as far as the philosophical background is concerned. And I am against the very concept of "nation". The world is one; I cannot say that my country is the best of all the countries.

"And I don't even see the reason for singing the song. It is not only that I am against nationalism, the song is untrue too, because what do you have?--poverty, slavery, starvation, sicknesses, increasing population and increasing problems. And you call this our garden and we are its nightingales! I don't see a single nightingale anywhere! These fifty teachers are here; can anybody raise his hand and say, 'I am a nightingale'? Let him sing, and let us see! These two thousand students are here; can anyone say it? Look at these poor students."

And they used to come from faraway villages, miles every day, from at least a twenty mile radius around the city, because there was no other high school except this. "They walk, they come utterly tired, they are hungry. And I have seen what they bring with them: just dry bread, not even buttered, and a little piece of salt. That's all that they bring every day and every day they eat it.

"These are your trees, this is your garden? So factually also it is not right. And I don't care whether Iqbal is a Nobel prize-winning poet or not. I don't care. It does not make me feel like singing this song; in every way uttering a lie."

The principal was so annoyed and so irritated that he could not speak for anger; he became almost red. Trembling, he went into his office and brought out his cane which was very famous--but he rarely used it. He told me to put both my hands in front of him, and he said, "This is my answer, and remember it."

I said, "These are my hands. You can beat my hands or my whole body if you want, but before you start, remember that from here I am going directly to the police station, because this is legally prohibited. Both you and your cane will be behind bars."

It was illegal to beat any student, but nobody cared. Still today, in India, students are beaten. And the law that students should not be physically beaten has existed for at least fifty years. So I said, "You decide. Here are my hands, this is your cane; you are here. And remember, these two thousand students are eyewitnesses, fifty teachers are eyewitnesses, and you will leave your signature on my hands. Leave it there! If you have any guts, beat me."

I can remember even today that he remained almost like a statue. The cane fell from his hand. He just turned back and went into his office. I told all the students, "Now you need not be worried; we are finished with this song. Unless they find something reasonable, we will simply be standing here for ten minutes in silence."

Now, do you call that mischief? It *can* be called mischief, and it was mischief in the eyes of my principal....

For three years he avoided me like anything. But I will not say it was mischief although it will appear so. I don't see a single point supporting the idea that it was mischief.

For three years, while I was in the high school, we continued the silence. The ten minutes' silence continued instead of prayer, because they could not come up with something better. Whatsoever they brought up I was capable of finding faults with. And without my approval, I was not going to allow it. So finally they decided, "Let this boy be gone from here, then...." And the day I left the school and went to the university....

I came back in some holidays and I went there to see what was happening: and the children were repeating the same song again. I went to the principal and I said, "I have just come to check. It has not reached your mind at all--again you started the same thing."

But he said, "Now please leave us alone. I was afraid that if you failed, then you would be here for one year more. I was praying for you to pass. I had told all the teachers to support you, to help you so that you pass. Any way you should not fail, otherwise one year more.... But now, you leave us alone."

I said, "I will not be coming again and again. I have just come to check and to see whether you have any mind or not, and you seem to be absolutely unintelligent. You are a postgraduate in science, and that too in mathematics--which is just an extension of logic--but you can't understand a simple thing. I will not be coming here because now I am occupied in the university. There are so many problems there, I cannot take care of your school." *ignor21*

The disease is not only dangerous, the disease is as ancient as man. The disease comes from the idea of comparison.

We are always comparing; from our very childhood we are taught comparison. Somebody else's child is more cute, more beautiful, more intelligent; somebody else's child is more obedient, and you are not...

All educational systems depend on comparison: somebody comes first, and somebody is the last in the class; somebody passes, somebody fails. Teachers appreciate students who are obedient; they hate the students, they punish the students who are not obedient in every way.

The whole structure of society is continuously comparing, and the very idea of comparison is absolutely false.

Each individual is unique because there is nobody else like him. Comparison would have been right if all individuals were alike; they are not. Even twins are not absolutely alike; it is impossible to find another man who is exactly like you. So we are comparing unique people--which creates the whole trouble.

When I entered my high school, I came first in the class. Somebody came thirtieth, and he was crying. I went to him and said, "You need not cry, and if you are crying I will sit by your side and start crying."

He said, "But why should you cry? You have come first."

I said, "This is all nonsense. It is only a question of seeing from where you are seeing: on that side I am first; on this side you are first, nobody could beat you. I can be defeated, but you cannot be defeated."

He started laughing at the idea that from the other end of the line he is also first; in fact, I am thirtieth from the other side.

In my vision, in schools there should be no examinations, so nobody comes first and nobody comes second, nobody passes and nobody fails. In schools there should be merits given every day by every teacher in different subjects to each student. And based on all those

merits it should be decided when a child is ready to move into another class. Some child may be ready within two months; there is no need for him to wait one year. Some child may move after eight months, some child may move after twelve months, some child may take fifteen months. But nobody is higher than the other; everybody is moving according to his pace, according to his interest.

Everybody has some uniqueness.

Education should be organized in such a way that that uniqueness comes over, becomes an actuality.

There should be no hierarchy in the world. *socrat12*

When I entered high school, I had a teacher who was a little eccentric about a few things. One was that whenever he took the attendance, he would not allow anybody to say, 'Yes, Sir.' When he called the names he would insist that we would say, 'Present, Sir.' And I loved it, because I started meditating. This is what I used to do: when he called my name, I would say, 'Present, Sir,' and I would be really present. I would forget everything and just stop and be present, pure presence.

He became aware by and by that I was doing something else. One day he called me after the class and said. 'What are you doing? You seem to be mysterious. When you say, "Present, Sir," what do you do exactly?--because suddenly your face changes, your eyes change, your movements stop, and I have started feeling some energy coming towards me. What are you doing? I feel very pulled,' he said, 'and sometimes now I have even started remembering you. In my home sometimes I suddenly hear you calling, "Present, Sir," and something happens to me. But what are you doing?'

If you just become present suddenly, the whole energy changes. The continuity that was going on in the mind stops. *sale14*

As far back as I can remember, I loved only one game--to argue.... To argue about everything. So very few grownup people could stand me. Understanding was out of the question....

I was never interested in going to school. That was the worst place. I was forced finally to go, but I resisted as much as I could, because there were only children who were not interested in things I was interested in and I was not interested in things they all were interested in. So I was an outsider.

My interest has remained the same: to know what is the ultimate truth, what is the meaning of life, why I am here and not anyone else. And I was determined that unless I find the answer, I am not going to rest, and I am not going to let anybody around me rest, either. *last113*

The ego wants you to be indispensable to existence, that without your work, existence will not be complete.

The same teaching was given to me by my parents, by my teachers, that "you have to do some work in your life; otherwise your life is just the life of a vagabond, a bum." I said, "Perhaps that is the work I am here for, to be a vagabond! Anyway, a few people are needed to be vagabonds..."

The teacher who was telling me about the work said, "It is very difficult to discuss with you." And I said to him, "This is a very psychological trap to enslave people into some work by giving nourishment to their ego, to say that by fulfilling this work you will have fulfilled your destiny."

I said to the teacher, "I don't have any destiny, because I cannot conceive that existence has any destiny. What destiny could existence have? When the work of existence is complete, that will mean an absolute death, because nothing more is there to be done. Everything has been done, so drop the curtain." I said, "I cannot see any purpose in the flowers, any purpose in the trees, any purpose in the oceans, any purpose in the stars..."

Existence is not a work, it is a celebration--a sheer dance of energy which will go on and on forever in different forms, but cannot disappear. The energy is eternal.

And I said to the teacher, "Never again mention work to me. Celebration is okay, but work? It is destroying the whole beauty of life. And I am in tune with existence, not in tune with you. You can go on doing your work. What work are you doing? Just being a geography teacher. I cannot conceive why existence needs a geography teacher. The whole geography is of the existence; what is the need of a teacher?"

It is a very wrong conditioning that has created a workaholic society, which condemns people who are not participating. *mani26*

I was continually insisting to my teachers, to my professors, to my vice-chancellors, "I don't want a bookish answer. That I can find in the library, I don't need you for that. I want your personal experience. Have you experienced anything that you can go on teaching?"

And I have seen their embarrassed faces, their empty eyes, their empty souls. Yes, they are full of rubbish, all kinds of doctrines, creeds, cults. If you want them to give you a sermon then they can give you a sermon, a beautiful sermon, on the ultimate goal of life.

And the truth is, life is only immediate; there is nothing ultimate. *dark16*

Alone you are born, alone you will die. Between these two alonenesses you can deceive yourself that you are not alone, that you have a wife, a husband, children, money, power. But between these two alonenesses you *are* alone. Everything is just to keep yourself engaged in something or other, so that you don't become aware of it.

From my very childhood I have never been associating with people. My whole family was very much concerned: I was not playing with children, and I have never played with them.

My teachers were concerned: "What do you go on doing when all the children are playing? You sit under the tree just by yourself." They thought something was wrong with me.

And I told them, "You need not be worried. The reality is that something is wrong with *you,* and wrong with all your children. I am perfectly happy to be alone."

Slowly slowly they accepted that that's how I am; nothing can be done about it. They tried in every way to help me to mix with other children of my age. But I enjoyed being alone so much that it looked almost neurotic to play football.

And I told my teacher, "I don't see any point in it. Why unnecessarily hit the football from here to there? There is no point. And even if you make the goal, so what? What is achieved out of it? And if these people love making goals so much, then rather than having one football, have eighteen footballs. Give everybody one, and he makes as many goals as he wants, nobody prevents him. Let them have goals to their heart's content! This way it is too difficult--why make it unnecessarily difficult?"

And my teacher said, "You don't understand at all that that will not be a game, if eighteen footballs are given to the children, and everybody is making goals as many times as he wants. That will not help."

I said, "I don't understand, that creating hindrances, preventing people.... They fall and they have fractures and all kinds of nonsense. And not only that: when there are matches, thousands of people gather to see them. It seems these people don't know that life is so short--and they are watching a football match! And they are so excited--jumping, shouting. To me, it is absolutely neurotic. I would rather sit under my tree."

I had my tree, a very beautiful tree, behind my school building. It became known that it was my tree, so nobody would go there. I used to sit there whenever there was time for play, or time for any kind of neurotic activity--"extra-curricular" activities.

And I found so much under that tree that whenever I used to go back to my town, I never went to the principal whose office was just close to the tree--just behind his office was the tree--but I used to go to the tree just to thank it, to show my gratitude.

The principal would come out, and he would say, "This is strange. You come to the town--you never come to me, you never come to the school, but you always come to this tree."

I said, "I have experienced much more under that tree than under your guidance and that of all kinds of mad teachers that you have. They have not given anything to me--in fact, whatever they gave to me I had to get rid of. But what this tree has given to me is still with me."

And you will be surprised--it happened twice, so it cannot be just coincidence.... In 1970 I stopped going to the town, because I gave a promise to my grandmother: "I will come only while you are alive. When you are gone, I have nothing to come here for."

I was informed that when I stopped going to the town, the tree died. I thought it must have been an accident, just a coincidence; it could not be connected with me. But it happened twice.*...

I understand that there is some synchronicity. If you silently sit with a tree...the tree is silent, you are silent...and two silences cannot remain separate, there is no way to divide them.

You are here. If you are all thinking thoughts, you are separate. But if you are all silent, then suddenly there is something like a collective soul.

Perhaps those two trees missed me. Nobody came close to them again, nobody with whom they could communicate. They died because they could not get any warmth from anybody. I had tremendous love and respect for those trees. *bond25*

*Note: refers to a tree at Jabalpur University when Osho was a professor, see Part V

In my high school days, I was almost always late because I was interested in so many things on the way. I always started from home to reach the school at the right time, but I never reached because so much was going on along the way--some magician was doing his tricks, and it was irresistible. Just to leave that magician and go to study...some stupid teacher talking about geography....

So I was punished continually, but soon my teachers realized that it was useless to punish me. Their first punishment was to tell me to go around the high school building seven times. I would ask, "If I go eleven times will it do?"

They would say, "Are you mad? This is a punishment."

I said, "I know this is a punishment, but I have missed my morning exercise. So if I make it my morning exercise, you are not losing anything. Your punishment is covered, my morning exercise is complete; nobody is losing anything, both are gaining."

So they stopped that, because this wouldn't do. They would tell me to stand outside the class. I said, "That's good, because I love the open air. The class is dark and dirty, and outside it is so beautiful. And in fact, sitting inside I am always looking outside. Who cares what you are teaching?--the birds are singing, the trees are blossoming...it is so beautiful outside."

The headmaster would come on his round, and every day he would find me standing outside. And he would say, "What is the matter?"

I said, "Nothing is the matter. I love to stand outside; it is healthier, hygienic. And you can see how beautiful it is."

But he said, "I will see your teacher. How is it that he allows you to stand outside?"

I said, "I don't know, but he tells me himself, every day, `Stand outside.' So now I don't even ask him. It has become a routine, so I simply come and stand here."

He asked the teacher. The teacher said, "It must have been thirty days ago! I told him only once to stand outside--since then he has not entered the class. I was thinking it was a punishment, and he is enjoying it. Not only that, he is spreading the rumor among the students that it is hygienic, it is healthy. And they are asking me, `Sir, can we also stand outside?' Then what am I to do here? Then I will also go and stand outside."

It is a question of how you take things. *enligh04*

One of my teachers was very perfectionistic, a great disciplinarian, a very beautiful man. Every year he started his class with the same introduction, because the students were new; he introduced himself by saying that, "It is better that I should make clear to you what kind of man I am, so you are not in the dark and you don't do anything without understanding the nature of the teacher. First: I don't believe in headaches, stomachaches, no. Anything that you cannot prove and anything that I cannot check by myself will not be an excuse to take a holiday or to go home. You can have a fever, I can feel your fever. So remember it--I simply don't believe in headaches and stomachaches because there is no proof. Even a physician has to rely upon the patient, that he has a headache--he may be lying, or he may be in illusion. What is the guarantee? How do you know that you are right?"

I said, "This is strange; this is going to be difficult"--because those were simple excuses to escape from any class, to say that "I have a strong headache and I want to go home."

He used to go every evening for a walk. Just by the side of the school there was a beautiful road, covered from both sides with big trees, mango trees.

I said, "Things have to be settled from the very beginning."

So I climbed up into a tree, high up, and waited for this teacher--he was a Mohammedan, his name was Rahimuddin. He came exactly on time...He was very precise in everything; at exactly the same time each day he used to pass by that tree.

I dropped a big mango on his head. He said, "Ahhhh!" and looked up. And he saw me there.

I said, "What is the matter? What has happened?"

For a moment there was silence. He said, "Come down."

I came down.

He said, "You have proved that there is something like a headache, but don't tell anybody. If you have a headache, you just raise one finger and I will give you a holiday. If you have a stomachache, you need not prove it to me--you just raise two fingers, because you seem to be dangerous!"

He was a bachelor, an old man; he had never married. He lived a very beautiful life, had a small cottage, a garden.

And he was very famous for one strange thing--because he had enough money, unmarried, no children, no wife.... He had three hundred and sixty-five suits of clothes, one for each day; then for the whole year that suit of clothes would not be used again. Naturally every husband was jealous.

He said, "I live alone. I sleep outside in the garden, and I don't want any proof for stomachache!--so one is enough. You have given me the proof that you are capable, so when you have a stomachache raise two fingers and I will understand. But this is an agreement between us: that you will not tell anybody else that headaches or stomachaches exist."

I said, "I am not worried about anybody else. My problem is solved because I want things from the very beginning to be clear, just like you do."

He said, "You have made it *very* clear--it is still hurting! I have been a teacher thirty years and nobody ever thought of this idea. I will remember you for my whole life."

It was a small incident, and would have been forgotten--but when people started coming to me many years after this incident he started telling people, "I knew beforehand that this boy was going to be someone extraordinary."

People asked, "How did you come to know?--and you never mentioned it before."

He said, "I had almost forgotten it; just now, as his name is becoming known around the world and people are coming to him from all over the world, I remembered. And now that incident has a totally different meaning. Because for my whole life I was introducing every class in the same way and nobody ever tried anything. And this was the only one--a singular instance--who proved to me that a headache had to be accepted. I knew it that very day."

In 1970 I went to that village for the last time. He had become very old. Hearing that I was there, he came to see me. I said, "I was going to come to you. You are too old, you should not have bothered to walk almost two miles."

He said, "I am feeling so happy. Seeing you it still hurts, but now I feel a certain pride that you were *my* student."

Now the whole thing takes a different color, it becomes a pride. Otherwise, if I had turned out to be a thief or a criminal, then the same incident would have been a proof: "I knew from the very beginning that this boy was going to be a criminal, that sooner or later he would murder somebody."

Retrospectively you always look at things in a way you would not have looked at them if life had moved in a different direction--the same things. The same things would not have given you the same indications. *enligh26*

In my childhood I had a friend whose father was a magician. They had a very good business--the business was that they had a few snakes. Being continually in their house, slowly I learned that ninety-seven percent of snakes don't have any poison. Only three percent of snakes have poison, and only one percent, the cobra, is very dangerous. Once the cobra bites you it is very difficult to save you. Death is almost certain. But the snakes all look alike.

The father used to have non-poisonous snakes, and he would send his son--who was my friend, and I accompanied him many times--to somebody's house. There we would leave two or three snakes around, and then the father would come with his special musical instrument that was used for snakes. He would announce, "If anybody has snakes in his house, I can catch them." As he started playing on his instrument, the snakes that we had left around the house would start coming, and for that service the housekeeper had to pay. He would say, "It is very good of you--once in a while you should come back, because we were not aware that there were snakes in our garden."

Knowing that there are snakes which don't have any poison, I would enter into my class with a snake in my pocket. I would just leave it on the table of the teacher, and he would stand on his chair and shout, "Save me!" The other students are running out...who is going to save him except me? And I would tell him, "I will save you, but remember that I have saved your life. You should not be nasty with me. Promise?" And with that snake sitting on his table, you could have taken any kind of promise.

Finally it was reported to the principal that a strange thing was going on. But a principal is just the same as anybody else. When he called me, I went there with two snakes. And I left them on his table, and he stood on his chair, and everybody in the whole school was looking through the windows--what is happening? I said, "Now, do you have something to say to me?"

He said, "No. Just don't bring these things in my office!"

I said, "I have not come on my own, you have called me. Now I cannot go without your promising me that you will not be nasty to me."

He said, "This is strange...but I promise, I will not be nasty to you."

I said, "That's okay; then I can persuade the snakes."

People have lived with such fear. Fear always seems to be around them--anything can create fear. And if the man had been a little spontaneous, he could have seen that if I can manage those snakes, certainly there must be some trick and there is no need to be afraid. But the very word *snake* is enough to trigger all the fears, of centuries of humanity, that you are carrying within you.

To my father it was reported, "Now your son is becoming more and more dangerous." My father said, "I have promised him, just as you have promised, not to interfere. Otherwise he will start bringing those snakes in the house!" *mani20*

I will tell one incident that I have never forgotten and will never forget.

In India, there is one day every year devoted to the worship of snakes. On that day, all over India, there are wrestling competitions. My school used to be for many years the champion of the whole district. This was due entirely to a single student who failed every year in matriculation. The school was happy about it, because he was a good wrestler.

The principal and the teachers all said to him, "Don't be worried. You can fail as much as you want, but every year you have to bring the championship to the school. And when you are tired, we will give you some employment in the school. Don't be worried about your employment, although you are not even a matriculate. We will make some arrangements, we can make you a peon: you do not need to be a matriculate."

And he was very happy that a job was guaranteed and every year he was the hero. But the year I reached my matric class that man unfortunately passed the examination. The whole school was sad and sorry. The principal called me and said, "Now find somebody, for up to now we have been winning."

I said, "It is a difficult thing to find a wrestler of his quality." He was doing nothing but exercises the whole day, morning till evening. And the school was providing him with as much milk as he needed, because every year he brought the championship..."It will be very difficult to find somebody, but I will try."

In my class there was a man, a young man, not very strong and not in any way a wrestler, but a very beautiful person with a great sense of humor. I told him he would have to do this.

He said, "I have never fought anybody. I have never been in any competition. I have never done any exercise. And the people who will be coming from other schools are trained."

I said, "Don't be worried. Somebody has at least to participate. At the most you can be a failure."

He said, "If that is all, then I am ready." And what he did left an impact on everybody.

It was going to be decided in the semi-finals ...and because my school was continuously the champion every other school was afraid. They were still thinking that because of our man we would finally win. So they had brought a professional wrestler who was not a student. They could find no other way to defeat our man who had won continuously for ten years.

Naturally, they had to find some way. So they looked and found a wrestler who was not too old and they shaved him well and prepared him perfectly as if he were a student. But he was

a trained wrestler and our candidate was not a wrestler at all. He asked me, "What am I supposed to do?"

I said, "Make it fun. Don't be worried." I had once seen a wrestler...the village where I lived was famous throughout the area for wrestlers. There were so many gymnasiums in that small village and wrestlers from outside used to come to fight with the wrestlers of the village.

Once I had watched a wrestler and had become very friendly with him. His style was very new. First he would dance around. The other wrestler is standing in the center, looking embarrassed, and he would dance. And he had a very beautiful body. He would dance all over the place. And his dance made the other man feel embarrassed and a little afraid also: "If this man is dancing with such joy, there must be some strategy that will defeat me." And then he would suddenly jump to the ground. He was not a very strong man, but he had a very beautiful body, a very proportionate body.

And he had made the man so much afraid by this time, by his dancing which was so out of the ordinary--nobody danced. There was no real need because most of the time he would win. I liked the man very much. He used to stay in a temple nearby, so I went to visit him and I said, "This is very beautiful. This is how things should be. You have a great psychological insight."

So I told the boy, "You do the same. First you dance around. Make the other fellow feel completely embarrassed. And we are here, because the competition is going to happen in our school. All the students, all the teachers will be there. We will clap when you dance. We will laugh and cheer you. So you dance, and don't be worried about that man. Let him stand in the middle, embarrassed, worried: what is going to happen, what is happening?"

So he danced and we clapped and shouted and cheered and that man looked near defeat. Nothing happened. But the boy that I had chosen was no match for him. He was a wrestler and this boy had no idea. He danced and then he simply jumped into the middle and fell flat on the ground. In Indian wrestling, the person who falls on the ground with his back touching the ground and the other person sitting on his chest is thought to be defeated and the man sitting on the chest is the winner. So that boy without fighting simply fell in front of him and we all cheered him and the man could not think what to do.

The boy said, "Sit on my chest. Sit down, and be victorious!" The man could not bring himself to sit down on the chest of this man who had fallen by himself. He looked all around and the boy was smiling.

And the referee came in and said, "What do you want to do with your opponent?"

He said, "I am simply puzzled. What kind of wrestling is going on?--because to sit on this poor boy's chest looks so ugly. I have not fought, how can I be victorious? And he is telling me to sit down. He is almost ordering me."

They were declared to be equal. And we took the boy on our shoulders and we danced around. And the principal called to me, "You managed ...at least to be equal. I had no hope that this was possible and when I saw that boy that you had chosen I thought the trophy was gone. But you trained him well."

I said, "I trained him only for dancing. What he did was absolutely spontaneous. Seeing the situation he said, `I am going to be defeated. What is the point of fighting unnecessarily and being harassed. Just lie down, rest.'"

But he was a very humble person with a great sense of humor. *chit30*

Three years I had been under the high school principal. Even the photograph that is taken when you are leaving the school...He was very much worried whether I would appear in that picture or not, whether I would come or not. I not only came, I came with a photographer.

He asked, "But why have you brought the photographer?"

I said, "This is the photographer, the poor photographer of the town. You always call a photographer from a bigger city; that is unnecessary. This poor man needs more work, because I have seen this photographer selling umbrellas in the rainy season and in the summer he is selling ice and soda and other cold drinks. But whenever some chance arises he takes photographs--some marriage or something. He is a poor man, and I want him to be our authorized photographer from today. This school should respect him."

The principal said, "Now that you have brought him..."

The poor photographer was very much afraid because he had never been called. I had explained everything to him--how he has to do it, how he has to arrange...and he had come with his best suit and everything. The principal was standing in the middle, and the teachers and everybody, and he arranged and did everything. And then he asked, "Ready?" I had prepared him.

He said, "I have to be worthy of the position, the authorized photographer of the high school"--that was the biggest institution in the town. So he asked, "Ready?" and then he clicked his camera and said, "Thank you" and everybody dispersed. Then he said, "Wait--because I forgot to put the plate in! And the whole fault is yours," he told me. "You never told me, `You have to put the plate in.' You told me everything else."

I said, "I thought that as a photographer you must know that the plate has to be put in; otherwise how will the photograph...? And all this `Thank you' and `Ready?' just went to waste. But no harm."

So I said, "Get ready again!" The principal was very angry because the school inspector was there, the collector was there, and it became such a hilarious thing when the photographer said, "I have forgotten to put the plate in, and now what to do!"

The principal called me in. He said, "This is the last day. You are leaving, but you are not leaving without mischief. Who told you to call this photographer? That idiot! That's why we have been avoiding him for years! And you have seen..."

I said, "But it was such a beautiful and hilarious scene! And everybody who has participated today will remember it his whole life. You should pay him a little more! And remember that from now on he is the authorized photographer of this school."

He said, "Are you leaving the school or are you still going to be here? This is our business...whom to make authorized or not."

I said, "That is not your business. I have told the class that is going to succeed me, the proper people, to take care that this photographer has to be brought every year, and if it is needed then they can call me from the college. It is not far away, only eighty miles. So every year on the photograph day I will be here to see if the authorized photographer is here or not."

He said, "Okay, he is authorized."

I said, "I want it in writing, because I don't trust you at all." And he had to give an authorized letter. I gave it to the photographer.

He said, "I was very nervous, but you have done such a great job--you have made me forever the authorized photographer. I can show this to other parties also, that I am not just an idiot as people think. I am the authorized photographer of the educational institute of the town."

And he asked me, "How did I do?"

I said, "You did perfectly well."

He said, "Just one mistake."

And I said, "That was not a mistake; that was the real thing, that you forgot the plate. Without it there was no joy. Photographs anybody can take, but you are really a genius!"

He said, "I was thinking that everybody will be angry."

I said, "While I am here nobody can be angry."

And he is still the authorized photographer! Whenever I have gone to the town I have enquired from him...He told me, "Now it has become established. Many principals have changed but I remain the authorized photographer. But you were right: the great joy that happened the first time has never happened again; I have not forgotten the plate."

Those people were powerful in every way, but somehow I never felt that they were really powerful. I felt they are just pretending to be powerful; deep down they are cowards, and if

you hit rightly all their power disappears. And I remained like that my whole childhood--in the school, in the college--it was an everyday thing. I have enjoyed all those moments.

I used to think sometimes that perhaps I am somehow different from other people because nobody gets into such trouble as I get. But all those troubles were giving me a certain strength and the strange experience that people who are pretending to be powerful are just suffering from an inferiority complex and nothing else.

Everybody who was concerned about me was worried every day that I may do something--and I was never planning anything. Things were simply happening.

Just my presence was enough, and something would trigger.

I would like everybody to live in that way. There will be differences of situations, of unique individualities--but I would like every child to live in this way so that he can remember every moment that has passed as *really* a golden moment.

I don't remember anything that I can say should not have happened or should have happened in a different way. The way it happened I enjoyed it so much and loved it so much, but everybody who was concerned was worried that I had spoiled a situation. *mystic09*

1951 Osho leaves school,

and decides to study philosophy

When I passed my matriculation exams, my whole family was in a great turmoil, because they all wanted...somebody wanted me to be a doctor, somebody wanted me to be a scientist, somebody wanted me to be an engineer--because in India these are respectable jobs, paying jobs. You become rich, you become well-known, you are honored. But I said, "I am going to study philosophy."

They all said, "This is nonsense! No man of sense will go and study philosophy. What will you do after that? Six years wasted in the university studying things which are of no use. They don't have any value, you will not even get a small service, a small job."

And they were right. In India, if you apply for the smallest job, like a clerk in the post office which needs only matriculation as qualification, and you have a master's degree in philosophy, you top the university, you have a gold medal--you will be refused. Only because of these things! These are disqualifications, you are a difficult person! A clerk should not be a philosopher; otherwise there are bound to be difficulties.

So they said, "You will suffer your whole life. Think it over."

I said, "I never think, you know that. I simply see. And there is no question of choice, I know what I am going to study. It is not a question of weighing which job will be more profitable. Even if I become a beggar, I am going to study philosophy."

They were at a loss. They all asked me, "But what is the reason that you want to study philosophy?"

I said, "The reason is that my whole life I am going to fight against philosophers. I have to know everything about them."

They said, "My God! This is your idea? We have never imagined that a man should study philosophy because he is going to fight philosophers his whole life." But they knew that I am crazy. They said, "Something like this was expected." Still they persisted: "There is time, you can still think about it. The universities will be opening in one month; you can still think."

I said, "One month, one year, one life makes no difference, because I don't have any choice. It is my choiceless responsibility."

One of my uncles, who was a graduate from the university, said, "It is absolutely impossible to talk with him--he uses words which don't seem to carry any meaning. Choicelessness...responsibility...awareness--what do these things have to do with life? You will need money, you will need a house, you will need to support a family.... "

I said, "I am not going to have a family. I am not going to have a house and I am not going to support anybody!" And I have not supported anybody and I have not made any house. I am the poorest man in the world!

They could not manage to force me to become a doctor, engineer, scientist, but they all were angry. *misery05*

One of my uncles is a poet, but the whole family was against him; they destroyed him. They did not allow him...they withdrew him from the university because they saw that if he passed from the university then all he was going to do was write poetry. But if he had no certificates, then he had no way to escape anywhere; he had to sit in the shop.

And I have seen him--when I was small, I saw him sitting in the shop. And if there was nobody else, only I was there...he knew that I never disturb anybody's business. You just have to be aware not to be disturb my business; then it is a contract. And it was a contract between me and him that he should never interrupt anything, whatsoever it was.

He said, "Okay, but don't you report anything about me."

I said, "I am not concerned."

What he used to do--a customer would come and he would simply wave his hand as if the customer where a beggar: "Just go!" He would not speak because somebody might hear, so he would just make a gesture with his hands: "Move on!" My father, my grandfather, they were all puzzled: "Whenever you sit here, no customer comes in."

He said, "What can I do? I can sit here but if nobody comes it is not my fault."

He was not interested in business at all; while sitting in the shop he was writing poetry. But soon they arranged his marriage. And I went on telling him, "You are getting trapped. First, why did you come back from the university? Don't you have any guts? You could have done anything--pulled a rickshaw, been a coolie at the railway station. You could have done anything."

I told him, "Your poetry is just lousy. They stopped sending money to you so you are back; now they are arranging your marriage and you don't know that that is the end of your poetry. At least right now you can shoo away the customers and go on writing a little bit. You will not be able to do that when your wife is here."

He said, "But my wife will be in the house, and I will be in the shop."

I said, "You just wait...because I see what happens to my father. My mother only sees him when he is there for his lunch or his supper. He simply goes on eating, his eyes down, and she goes on hammering him about all kinds of things....

So I told my uncle, "You don't know your father but he is my friend and I know the whole trap, what is going on--the whole conspiracy. But I have also a pact with my grandfather that I will not reveal any rumors in the house. But this is something serious; they are going to trap you. They have just found a really beautiful woman for you, there is no doubt about it"...because my grandfather had taken me to choose her. He said, "I have become too old, and you are so sharp. Find out whether this girl will do or not." And he had found really a beautiful girl.

So I said, "He has found a beautiful girl but the reason why he is trying to find a beautiful girl is so that you forget all your poetry." And that's what happened. Once he got married then most of his time he was with his wife or he was in the shop--and slowly slowly his poetry started disappearing. And his wife started dominating him for the simple reason that she felt guilty because everybody in the house, children included, knew that "your husband is just a do-nothing, useless, just a wastage."

So she was nagging my uncle, "You forget about all poetry." She burned the copies of his poetry, his years' work, and she told him, "No more poetry for you--because I feel ashamed, everybody laughs at me." They destroyed his poetry.

I asked my father, "Why are all you people against my poor uncle? He is not doing any harm. Poetry is not harmful, it is not violent. He is not writing war songs or anything like that; he writes beautiful love poetry. Why are you against him?"

They said, "We are not against him; all that we want is that he should stand on his feet. Now he is married, tomorrow he will have children; who is going to feed them continually?" And that's what happened. Now he has a shop and now he no more moves people on. His children are married; they have children. The last time I went, in 1970, I asked him, "What about the customers?"

He said, "There is nothing about the customers--all my poetry is gone. And you were right that my wife would be real trouble. Neither my grandfather, nor your father, nor my other brother--nobody was such a trouble. But my wife continually nagging...finally I had to decide. Either I have to become a monk renounce the world--but that too is difficult: a Jaina monk cannot write poetry because poetry belongs to ordinary people. And poetry is something basically connected with the affair of love, so what can a monk write?"

I said, "You can write sutras, religious *bhajans* devoted to some god--songs, devotional songs."

He said, "But I am not interested in any god, in any devotion. I want to write what I feel in my heart."

I said, "That is finished--your heart is married!" And in India at that time divorce was not legal either. And even though now it is legal it rarely happens, and only in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, New Delhi--nowhere else. They destroyed his poetry to keep him tethered to the lowest part of his being.

All the painters, all the poets, all the musicians have faced a world which is against them. Why?--because what they are doing is something which has no relationship with the whole world and its life. The love they are talking about is not the love that people are living. *misery05*

My parents wanted me to become an engineer or a doctor. I simply refused. I said, "I am going to study philosophy because I have to fight philosophers all my life."

They said, "What nonsense. If you want to fight philosophers why should you waste six years in studying philosophy?"

I said, "Without studying philosophy I cannot fight rightly. I have to study philosophy. I enjoy the way philosophy argues, and I want to go into the very deepest arguments all the philosophies have produced. But I am going to fight against it, because my experience is that not a single philosopher has ever become enlightened. They were just playing with words, gymnastics of logic; they never reached above their minds. They did a great job with their minds, but they remained minds."

My parents threatened me, "If you choose philosophy then remember we are not going to support you financially."

I said, "That you need not say. I was not going to accept it anyway, because when I choose my subject then I will find my way. I am not choosing your subject; naturally you are out of the question. Why should I ask your financial support? Even if you give it, I will reject it."

They were shocked. They could not believe how I would manage--but I managed. In the night I was editing a newspaper, and in the morning I was going to the college. And in between, whenever I could find time, I would go to sleep.

Finally they started feeling guilty. My father went on writing to me, "Forgive us and accept."

I went on returning their money orders, and one day he himself came and he said, "Can't you forget, can't you forgive?"

I said, "I can forgive but I cannot forget, because you were forcing me into something just because of finances, just because of money"--money was more important to them. "You thought more of money than you thought of me, and you threatened me. I had not asked for money. You can keep your money. I am managing perfectly well." *socrat12*

And when I became a wandering teacher around the country, doing the job for which I had studied logic and philosophy because I wanted to be perfectly acquainted with the enemy, soon there was not a single man who was ready to accept my challenge. Then my family started feeling guilty, feeling that it was good that they were not able to make me a doctor, engineer, scientist. I had proved that they were wrong.

They started asking me, "Forgive us."

I said, "There is no problem, because I never took all your advice seriously. I never bothered! Whatever I was going to do, I was going to do in spite of everything going against me! So don't feel guilty. I have never taken your advice seriously; I was hearing you, but not listening. I had a decision in me, a decisiveness."

The process is very simple.

Meditate, become more aware and then you will see: choices disappear, a choicelessness arises.

And it is such a tremendous joy to have a choiceless spontaneity. It is such a freedom. Choice is such a burden. *dless27*